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Jerusalem
The Holy City

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AN ORIGINAL PLAY
IN FOUR ACTS, BY

CLARENCE BENNETT

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JERUSALEM, THE HOLY CITY

(Scene near the River Jordan. Malchus, Longinus, Caiaphas, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Andrew, Scribes, Pharisees, and people.)

MALCH. Ah! Longinus, and art thou here too? And hast thou come, drawn here by the teachings of this John the Baptist?

LONG. To Pluto with your Johns and your teachers! I am a Roman and a soldier. I worship the Gods of Rome! Belike it thou who art here to learn of this wild man.

MALCH. Verily not I! We know too much of him already; he maketh fools of the poor and ignorant, not of us, the wealthy and the learned class. We are Levites and Pharisees.

CAIPH. The crowds follow him, wild at his teachings and his baptisms. It is time such false teachers were crushed.

NICODEMUS. (L. near I.) Rabbi Caiphas, what hath this John the Baptist said that saith he should be crushed? He hath not contradicted Judea's prophets and—

CAIPH. He teacheth the common people to despise us, the learned priests and doctors of the law. He holdeth us too up to ridicule.

NICOD. (L. near I.) He hath taught naught but purity of life and preparation of heart for the coming of the Messiah.

CAIPH. Belike he is an Essene and they despise our Talmud and will none of it.

NICOD. Nay, he is a Nazerite, and standeth equal with the priests. It is lawful for him to enter the inner temple.

CAIPH. He teacheth the rabble that we, the mighty ones of Israel, wear our religion as a cloak that hideth corrupt lives. Is that not enough? Mayhap he hath made a fool of thee also.

NICOD. No, he hath made me wise, I fear not the truth; and if it hurteth thee and the other Pharisees, the fault lieth not in the truth, but in your hearts.

CAIPH. What sayest thou, man? Have a care lest thou be cast out of the synagogue.

NICOD. I fear thee not Caiphas! Am I not one of the Sanhedrim? I tell thee to thy teeth thou art not High Priest by right, thou and thy father, Annas, have bought the priestly office from the Caesars, that was by right of birth another's by heritage from God.

CAIPH. (Enraged) Dost thou dare—

NICOD. Dare?—I tell thee more! Ye and the sons of Annas have made the temple of the living God a sordid, haggling market in your lust for gold.

CAIPH. Now by the altar.

MALCH. (restraining him aside.) Stay, uncle, wait.

CAIPH. Aye, I bide my time,—Rabbi Nicodemus thou knowest me! "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."

NICOD. Faugh! I fear not thy teeth!

MARIUS (entering R. 3.) Ah! nobles, greeting to you all! The king cometh this way today. I see you are here to welcome him.

CAIPH. Yes, noble Marius, that in part, and part to trap a rat that troubleth our house, this John, they call the Baptist.

NICOD. Beware! Lest the rat know thy foundations till thine house doth tumble about thine ears!

CAIPH. Nicodemus, have a care! I am not one to spare mine enemies.

NICOD. The truth is ever thine enemy! Quarrel thou with it! I have done!

MARIUS. Why, noble Rabbis of Israel, what is this heat? Who this John? What hath he taught that troubleth you?

LONG. That it is better to be a man than a hypocrite. An honest dog than a jackal in a fur robe.

ANDREW. I'll tell thee, Roman, he hath taught all men to live pure lives, forsake their sins and to prepare for the Messiah's coming. He hath taught virtue and goodness, and some there be who like it not.

MALCHUS. Thou dog!

ANDREW. Perhaps. A dog of a good litter though! I am of the breed of David! Can'st thou say as much?

MARIUS. (Laughing.) Ha! Ha! He matched thee there. (Aside) I like this fellow. (aloud) Why followest this John the Baptist?

ANDREW. Because he teacheth men to love the right for the right's sake, and to do good for love of God, not for the praise of man.

MARIUS. By Mars! An honest doctrine,—a manly one, I like this John already.

MALCH. A ragged fanatic! The jest and scorn of all the leading men of Judea.

NICOD. NO! not at all.

MARIUS. (To Nicod.) Right, friend! (to Malch') Tis not the first time ragged honesty hath been the scorn and jest of you—proud Levites, Pharisees, and Sadducees! Oil and water do not mix. (Talks in action to Nicod.)

MALCH. (Aside, enraged) Anathema upon this Roman heathen!

CAIPH. (Aside to him) Hush! He is of Rome, and is in power over us. His influence could cost both me and Annas our High Priestly office, we can wait. (To Marius) Noble Marius, as thou sayest, King Herod cometh to Jerusalem today.

MARIUS. Yes, He journeyeth by this way.

CAIPH. And doubtless, thou hast come out to meet him; or was it to meet the fair Salome, his niece and step-daughter?

MARIUS. Ah! I see thou too wast young once.

CAIPH. I am not yet so old but that my heart beateth faster at the sight of woman's loveliness. Thou art most fortunate, to have won such a prize. The daughter of a king, too.

MALCH. (looks off L.) Master Caiphas! See! Here cometh this prophet of the rabble,—this John the Baptist! Listen! We shall hear something. (John enters L. 3. with common people (overhearing).)

JOHN (C.) Ye shall hear the truth! Give heed to that ye hear and let it sink into your souls and take root there! Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, aye, even at the door! Prepare

ye the way of the Lord! Make clean your lives and purify your hearts that He may enter in and dwell there.

MARIUS. (R. C.) But friend, how shall men do this?

JOHN. By repentance, charity, humility.

MAN. What charity then shall we do?

JOHN. He that hath two coats, let him give to him that hath none; and that he hath bread give unto him that is an hungered.

PUBLICAN. Master, I am a publican, a tax-gatherer, what shall I do?

JOHN. Be just, exact no more than that thou has a right to.

LONG. Well, teacher, John? I am a soldier. What hast thou to say to me?

JOHN. Do violence to no man, neither accuse any man falsely; be content with thy wages. Prey not upon them that are in thy power.

LONG. (Aside astonished) By Hercules! an oracle! He readeth the hearts of men!

NICOD. Art thou the Messiah?

JOHN. I warn you of his coming.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA. Art thou that prophet that was to come?

JOHN. I am the herald that goeth before the face of the king. A voice that crieth in the wilderness:—"Prepare ye! The Messiah cometh! Aye he is here in Israel even now. He that cometh after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy but to loose his sandals.

MARIUS. How shall men know Him that cometh after thee? Who is He?

JOHN. Have ye not seen Him? JESUS OF NAZARETH? Have not known Him by His mighty works? He that healeth the sick, that maketh the blind to see, the lame to walk? What prophet in Israel hath done these things afore time? I indeed, baptise you with water unto repentance; but He shall baptise you with the HOLY SPIRIT and with fire!

CAIPH. (Mockingly) Oh mighty Doctor! We have come to learn of thee, thou baptisest unto repentance, do'st thou? That is, thou cleanest man of sin by washing him! (Pharisees and Sadducees laugh.)

JOHN. Oh, Scribes! Oh, Pharisees! Oh generation of vipers! Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

MALCH. (Mockingly) Nay, good Rabbi, we have come to thee repentant.

JOHN. Bring forth then the fruits of repentance; for I say unto you the tree that bringeth forth not good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire.

CAIPH. Enough! thou fool! What need we of thy repentance? Are we not God's chosen? The children of Abraham?

JOHN. Think not to say to yourselves:—"We are safe! We have Abraham for our father!" God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

CAIPHAS. Have a care how thou do'st strike at us who hold high place in Israel, or woe unto thee!

JOHN. Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, ye only do good works to be seen of men. Ye love the chief seats in the synagogues, that men may see you pray: ye devour widows' houses and make long prayers for a pretense! Woe unto you I say! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither enter in yourselves nor suffer those who are entering to go in: therefore

yours shall be the greater damnation! (Stands with folded arms, calm and brave.)

CAIPH. (In rage.) Who is this that darest thus to scorn the foremost men of Judea? Some Gentile scum—

ELIZABETH. (Appears R. U.) His father was a Levite and a priest of Israel!

CAIPH. Woman! Who art thou?

ELIZABETH. His mother! (Picture-paused) (To John) My son! (Clasped in his arms.)

JOHN. Heaven, I thank thee thou hast made me the son of such a mother!

MALCH. (Sneering) Hath the jackal, then a mother?

NICOD. It seemeth thou had'st.

JOHN. Hast thou seen the Master?'

ELIZABETH. Yea, my son, I am but now come hither. He is at Genesaret, where He teacheth the people and hath fed them by a miracle. The lame, the halt, the blind, the suffering, flock to Him and are healed.

JOHN. Come! Let us walk apart and thou shalt tell me of Him and His mighty works. Come! (They exit L. 2.)

MARIUS (Looking after, follows to L.) Purity, humanity, charity to the poor! How different from the worship of our Gods.

NICOD. (L. near I.) What thinkest thou of John?

MARIUS. As of a lion barked at by curs! (Talks with Nicod. and Andrew L.)

CAIPH. (To Malch.) This fellow must be silenced. He speaketh all too plainly. These common people must be kept in awe of us.

MALCH. Hear thou my counsel. Herod cometh this way. This fellow's bluntness shall be his ruin.

CAIPH. What meanest thou, Malchus?

MALCH. Can'st thou not see? He shall be brought here. He will tell the king his sins as bitterly as he hath us. The king is weak and loveth flattery and not reproof. Herod will seize and cast him into prison.

CAIPH. He dareth not do this. Herod feareth the people and they love this man.

MALCH. His fear of them is not so strong as love for Queen Herodias, his brother Phillip's wife. He hath already dared a war but to possess her! John will not spare King Herod's sin with her. She in her rage, will bend the king to seize him. Then he's in our power. (Andrew exits L. U. E.)

CAIAPH. Verily, Malchus thou hast the shrewdest head in Israel! Let us go to meet King Herod.

LONG. See! here cometh Salome the daughter of the king! (She enters R. 2 followed by attendants) All happiness to thee, oh Royal Lady!

SALOME. I thank thee, brave Longinus, Ah! Rabbi Caiphas, greeting!

CAIPH. Greetings and blessings on thee, fairest princess of the East. I give thee the blessings of my priestly office. (Raising hands in blessing, she inclines her head.)

SALOME. I thank thee, Rabbi Caiphas, Ah! nobles of Judea greeting! (All bow) (Marius sees her for the first time. Springs to her side.)

MARIUS. (Kisses her hands.) Salome.



SALOME. (Half vexed.) Oh! at last! I thought thou hadst no eyes for me!

CAIPH. Come let us meet the king! (All go to R., but Marius and Salome) Our homage to thee princess! (All bow.)

NICOD. Verily we will not be missed here. (All exit R. 2.)

MARIUS. Salome, my queen.

SALOME. Thy queen? Ah, thou were so in love with thine own thoughts thou couldst not see me! What maid was in thy mind, Marius?

MARIUS. None, I swear it, my Salome! I was but pondering on this John, the mighty teacher of the people.

SALOME. (With contempt.) A howling jackal of the desert, that leadeth his pack who follow howling after! Some upstart of the common herd, the ragged mob—his teachings full of noise and nothingness.

MARIUS. Thou hast not heard him, my Salome! He teacheth kindness, charity and honesty, the manliness of men!

SALOME. (Passionately) Oh have done with him, Marius! Leave such things to the doctors of the law, the old, the cold and the decrepit! We are young! Our veins are full of fire, of passion! of heart-hunger! Let us drink deep of the wine of joy while we are young. 'Tis time enough to think of cold morality, when we are grown too old for love.

MARIUS. Salome?

SALOME. (Throws herself in her arms.) Marius! Take me! I am thine! Do with me as thou wilt!

MARIUS. (He kisses her.) Salome! Hush! The king (Enter guards, Herod and Herodias followed by the others and Courtiers R. 3.)

HEROD. Noble Marius! Our thanks! I see thou hast come out to meet us; or is it a sweeter homage than to us that draws thee hither?

MARIUS. Hail Great King! I cry thy mercy and confess that this was a divided homage, to Salome and your royal selves.

HEROD. (Smiling.) Thy little queen is a spoiled, petted, jealous sovereign: she claimeth thine entire allegiance. Ah, fair tyrants: (caressing Herodias) they wear our hearts for crowns and rule us with despotic sway! (Converses with Malchus.)

CAIPH. Such is the power of flawless beauty, (bows to Herodias.)

HERODIAS. (Smiling.) Ah! Rabbi Caiphas? thou art more a courtier than a High Priest of Israel.

CAIPH. We priests are men; and, as such, are not proof against the power of lovely woman.

HERODIAS. Thou art too old to flatter.

CAIPH. One must be very old and blind, oh royal lady, who could not see such charms. (They talk.)

HEROD. What wast thou saying Malchus, of this John the Baptist?

MALCH. That he exciteth the multitude, who, in droves, like sheep, crowd at his heels.

HEROD. He must have that within which maketh him a leader of mankind. I have heard much of him and of his teachings, I too would see this man.

CAIPH. And so thou mayest. He is near at hand. He hath

just parted from his mother yonder, and even now he cometh hither.

HEROD. (To Malchus.) Go, summon him before us. (Exit Malchus L. 2.)

CAIPH. This fellow hath a bitter tongue. 'Twere best that it were curbed.

HEROD. (Smiling.) Hath he told the Pharisees some bitter truth?

CAIPH. He careth nothing for our ancient usages and hath no reverence for the foremost men of Israel.

NICOD. L. I. Meaning thee?

CAIPH. (In rage R. 2.) Nicodemus I—.

HEROD. (R. C.) Peace! This is not a brawling market! Ye stand in the presence of the King! (They bow.)

MARIUS. (R. 2. with Salome.) John hath only spoken plain blunt truth! but the truth woundeth, sometimes, King! But he is here. (Malchus, enters L. 3. followed by John who stands C. with folded arms.)

HEROD. Fellow! dost thou pay no reverence to thy King?

JOHN. My King and thine are one.

HEROD. Meanest thou, Tiberius Caesar, the Emperor of the world?

JOHN. Nay, one mightier than Caesar, I mean the KING of KINGS, THE EMPEROR of Heaven! (Points up.)

HEROD. Knowest thou who I am?

JOHN. Yea, thou art Herod, King of Galilee.

HEROD. And knowing me dost thou not bow before thy King?

JOHN. I bow before our King! (Points upward.) To me all men are men, let them wear crowns or rags!

HEROD. What! so haughty?

JOHN. Nay, so humble. What should we do with pride? We are but sinners in the sight of God,—Let us repent, forsake our sins and purify our hearts. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!

HEROD. The Kingdom of Heaven?

JOHN. Aye, the Messiah cometh. Yea, verily He is here.

HEROD. Thou?

JOHN. Nay, one mightier than I. I'm but His messenger that goeth before His face.

HEROD. And who is this Messiah, and when cometh He?

JOHN. He hath already come. Thou shouldst have known Him by His mighty works—

HEROD. What works?

JOHN. He healeth the sick, He feedeth the hungry. He teacheth the poor and lowly. He humbleth the proud. Prepare ye your hearts for His teachings.

HEROD. What preparation must we make?

JOHN. Repent and put away thy sins.

HEROD. And darest thou tell thy King his sins?

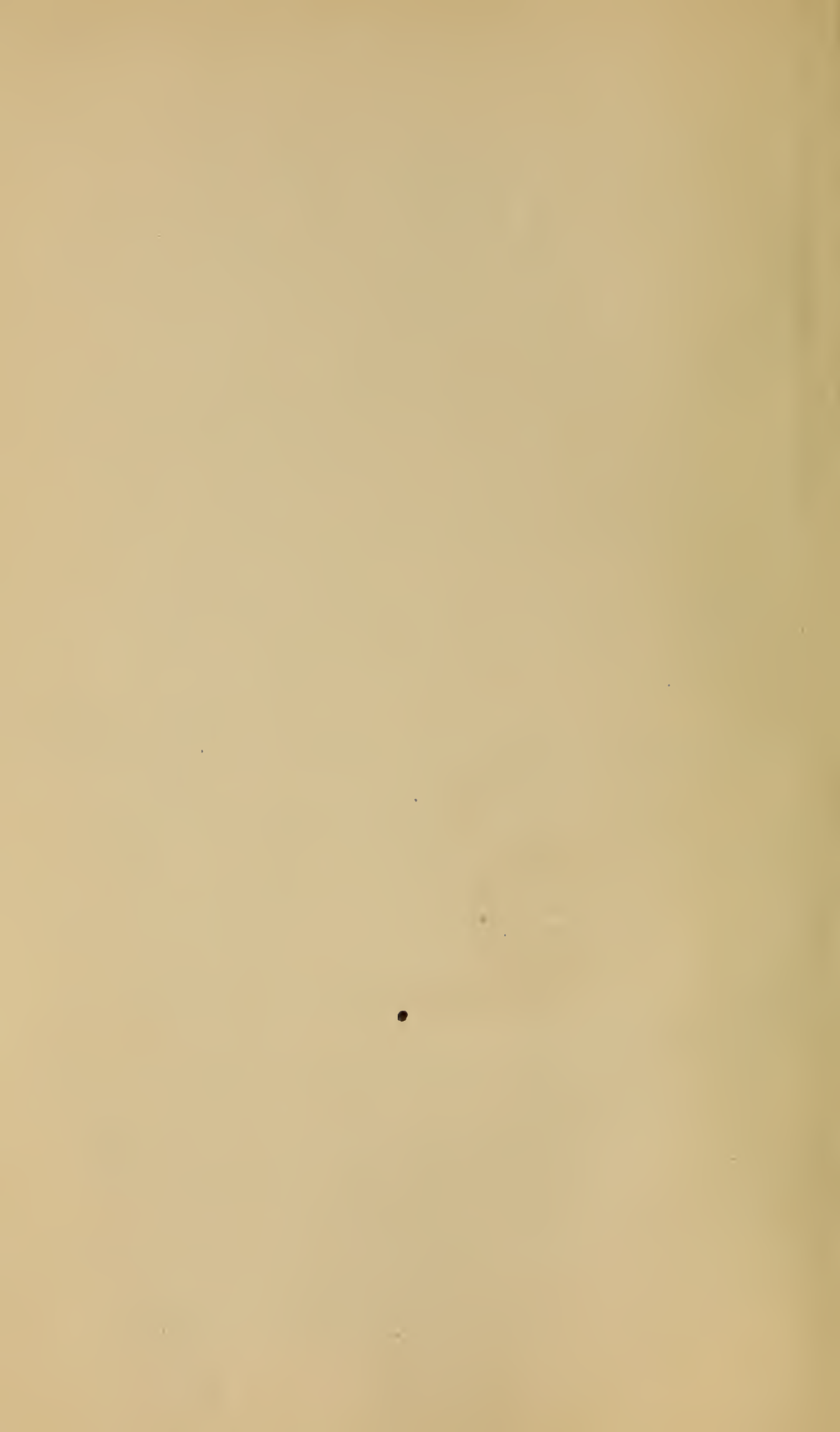
MALCH. (Aside to Caiph.) Now thou wilt see.

HEROD. Well, fellow, of what need I repent?

JOHN. And canst thou ask Oh King? Didst thou not wed the daughter of Aretas, King of Araby?

HEROD. Well, is it then a sin that men should marry?

JOHN. Nay, but being wed, thou took'st thy brother Philip's wife, while yet he liveth, and called her thine, thy wife. Thus didst thou



violate the laws of God and Israel! (Salome goes to her mother.)

HERODIAS. Beware! Thy boldness may cost thee thy head!

JOHN. Beware, oh woman! Thy sins may cost thee thy soul!

HERODIAS. Thou scum! My sins?

JOHN. Aye, thy deed of shame brought war upon thy realm! Aretas, in revenge, smote Galilee. This guilty love of thine and his hath stained the land with blood,—

HEROD. What! Darest thou thus insult our queen?

JOHN. Aretas' daughter is thy queen by right. This woman is the plaything of thy lust,—thy concubine!

HERODIAS. (In rage) Guards, seize him! (People murmur L.)

HEROD. Stay a little!

CAIPH. (Aside to Herod) Nay, hear me! Thou must seize him Herod. If thou lettest pass this insult to thy queen and thee, 'twill win for thee the scorn of Israel!

HERODIAS. Hath thy love grown so cold, my Herod, to calmly brook this mortal insult to Herodias?

HEROD. (Troubled) The people love him. It is dangerous.

CAIPH. Less dangerous than to bear this insult.

HEROD. (Reluctantly) Have then thy way.

MARIUS. Nay, hear me, but one word. Thou didst demand that he should tell thee. He hath but obeyed thy bidding king!

HEROD. Aye, that is true.

SALOME. Marius! Would'st thou spare him who hath so grossly wronged my mother?

MARIUS. I would be just! This man hath done but what he thought his duty.

HEROD. (To John.) Recall thine insult then, and sue for pardon!

JOHN. (Calmly.) Nay, I cannot! I would be false then to my duty, to thee, to heaven! King, my words are true!

HEROD. (In rage.) Fool! Knowest thou not thy danger?

JOHN. I know my duty.

HERODIAS. Ah! my veins are fire! Thou knowest me, Herod! I can love and hate! If I am naught to thee, let this man go! Let him heap shame on me and thee! Or, if thou lovest me, avenge me or I swear that thou shalt lose my love!

HEROD. Enough! Away with him!

MARIUS. (Remonstrating) King!

JOHN. Let be, my friend, I have done my duty. (Exits R. with guards.)

HERODIAS. (Throws herself into Herod's arms) My Herod! My King! My God!

HEROD. My love! My Life!

MALCH. (Aside to Caiph.) We triumph!

CAIPH. Clever Malchus!

HEROD. We wait too long, friends, forward toward Jerusalem! (All go R.)

MARIUS. (Following, to Andrew.) I must save him. Meet me, at night-fall, at the palace porch, on the king's birthday.

ANDREW. I'll be there. (They exit.)

MALCH. (Watching them, to Caiph.) What said Marius to that fisherman?

CAIPH. It matters little, we have won! The tongues that wag too boldly 'gainst the Levites, Scribes and Pharisees,—the high and mighty men of Israel, shall loose the heads that wagged them! Come! (exit R. people follow with murmurs of "Shame" "Tyrant" etc. Scene changes.)

Scene 2. The terrace of the palace of Herod, at twilight, gradually changing to moonlight. Burning Roman torches on stage. Lights at back, gradually change to blue moonlight. Colonade of arches at back opening on terrace, and tropic gardens with Jerusalem in distance. Throne on 3 steps L. 2. E. entrance back of arches, also back of throne, sound of music and laughter and chorus at rise out L. Marius up C. looking off L. At end of song, shouts, "Good! Long live the King!"

HEROD. (Out L.) More wine, slaves!

MARIUS. The birth-day of the King! the sound of harp and timbrel, of song and laughter, youth, wine and love; yet how it jarreth on my soul. Ah! I cannot forget that holy man, clad in his coarse raiment, like the poor and lowly,—teaching his simple, lofty lesson of a pure and holy life; doing his duty as he seeth it. (Sits on steps of throne L.) How my heart turneth from this revelry, to him in yonder lonely dungeon! I have tried every means to open his prison doors, and yet, this far, in vain. Would I might set him free, but how? how? (Wrapt in thought. Salome comes on L. 3. E. Sees him, steals down and quickly throws herself at his feet. Her head in his lap, her arms around him, laughs.) SALOME!

SALOME. Yes! Ah, truant! I have found thee!

MARIUS. (Kisses her.) Salome!

SALOME. Why dost thou fly from me my love? Where are thy smiles? My heart is hungry for them! Marius! dost thou love me?

MARIUS. (Ardently.) Love thee? Oh! fairest flower of the East! Thou knowest that I love thee.

SALOME. Oh, tell me so again! My soul is filled with doubt and fear. Thou art sad. Tell thy Salome why.

MARIUS. Shall I tell thee, dear one?

SALOME. Yes.

MARIUS. (Sadly.) It is the thought of that poor captive yonder. I would have him free.

SALOME. (Half starting up.) Thing not of him! I hate him! He hath heaped shame and insult on my mother! There, nay, be not angry! Look in mine eyes, my heart! Drink deep the rich wine of my love! There clasp me close! Aye, closer yet, my sweet!

MARIUS. (Passionately) Salome! My queen! My Venus!

SALOME. (With abandon) Oh! I would make thee drunk with love, as with the heavy perfume of the jasmine! Marius, I would be thine! all thine!

MARIUS. Oh! Lovely woman! thou art a thing of sunshine and of flowers, of gurgling laughter and sweet music—of kisses, sighs and soft caresses! Ah! thou hast made me drunk with passion! (kisses her.)

SALOME. I would have thee so, my love! (Rising she draws him up the stage C.) Come! out into the moonlit gardens, midst the murmuring of fountains,—the breath of flowers,—the soft, sensuous night! Come! (Throws herself in his arms) My Marius!

SERVANT. (enters L. 3 E.) King Herod calleth for thee, lady! (Exit L 3)

SALOME. Oh! cruel! cruel! Wait for me yonder, in the ante room, my love! I'll join thee anon. (Kisses him) (They exit L. 3 E.) (Pathetic music, and laughter out L. 3 E. as Andrew enters through C. arch from L. ragged and haggard. Moonlight on him.)

ANDREW. (On picture) The sound of revelry and wild debauch! they feast and laugh while he, poor master, lieth there in

darkness and in chains! Oh, was John right? Is JESUS the Messiah? Why doth He not lead His people forth, free John from prison and ascend the throne of Israel? Oh! God, Thou seest all! I pray, if it be possible, save him, my master, tutor, friend! Save him and set him free!

MARIUS. (Enters L. 3 E.—) What Andrew! Is it thou?

ANDREW. (R. C.) Yes.

MARIUS. (C.) But so worn and haggard that I hardly knew thee!

ANDREW. Sorrow is a hard master and I am his slave! Mine is the ceaseless toil of woe!

MARIUS. Nay, friends take hope!

ANDREW. What hope is there?

MARIUS. I have tried every means. Some subtle foe—

ANDREW. Friend, art sure that foe is not thyself?

MARIUS. (Surprised) What meanest thou?

ANDREW. Thou'rt young, art brave. Thou art a man that women love to look upon. Art thou sure this sleek and purring leopard, Salome, hath not weaned thine heart away from and us who wait?

MARIUS. (Proudly) Nay, man! Marius' word hath ever been his bond! But that I have been balked by some fierce, hidden foe, I would have had him free. That foe, methinks, is the high Priest Caiphaz and his fawning cur, one Malchus.

ANDREW. Belike Herodias is the foe we most should fear! Women like her have cost the world more blood than flows within the veins of living men today.

MARIUS. I fear her power against us, but have not lost hope. This night, at the King's feast, I will attempt again, while Herod, gay and flushed with wine, hath half-forgot his hate.

ANDREW. Oh! may the God of our forefathers aid thee and save my master!

MARIUS. Thou art a true and a devoted friend.

ANDREW. This man hath been my guide, mine elder brother and my teacher in the mighty truths of God!

MARIUS. I have heard little of his teachings, but that little hath sunk deep into my heart. Then tell me more of them.

ANDREW. My master saith that men must put away their sins, their pride, their selfishness, and turn their hearts, repentant, toward the Coming ONE.

MARIUS. Who is this coming One?

ANDREW. JESUS of Nazareth! John saith this Jesus is the son of God that taketh the world's sins away.

MARIUS. Is this He that teacheth that same simple holiness that John hath taught? the One that healeth all the ills of men, and that, they say, hath raised the dead?

ANDREW. Yes, Jesus, thy call the Christ, the Messiah! And whoso shall believe on Him, shall have forgiveness and eternal life.

MARIUS. (Fervently.) I do believe! This doctrine is of God, not man! He who hath power over life and death must be the very God in human flesh.

ANDREW. The Holy light hath come to thee! See that thou lose it not.

MARIUS. Nay, friend, brother! Fear me not! (Salome enters L. 3 looking for Marius, sees him, stops and listens)

ANDREW. Nay, but thou art young, noble! This corrupt court—

MARIUS. I have dwelt thus in courts from boyhood and yet kept my spirit free from guile.

ANDREW. I believe thee, Marius; but still thou art young. Thou lovest and art loved. Salome, too, is fair, but she is not of us: The choice will come to thee between thy faith and her.

SALOME. Ah—

MARIUS. Trust me, my friend, when firm conviction sets its seal upon my heart, not even the smile of love may break its seal! (Salome shows excitement.)

ANDREW. Ah, I fear she will yet win thee from us!

MARIUS. Nay. thy faith henceforth is mine! and should the choice come twixt love and duty, I would crucify my heart ere I'd prove false to truth!

SALOME. (Rushes at Andrew with dagger) Robber!

MARIUS. (Catches her hand, the dagger falls) Salome! What wouldst thou do?

SALOME. (Fiercely) Kill him who robbed me of thy love!

MARIUS. He hath not robbed thee.

SALOME. 'Tis false. I heard thy words,—that thou wouldst give me up, but not thy faith in John and in the Nazarine!

MARIUS. Hear me, Salome! I would bring thee a heart all pure and honest! I would have thee mine, my own, my wife! Come! Give me thy hand and let us walk together in this higher path, this Holy life!

SALOME. Paugh! I hate thee! This is but half a love that needeth any other worship. I would have thee all or none!

MARIUS. Salome, hear me!

SALOME. No! Thou wouldst forsake me for this faith of beggars; for these rabble prophets! Be it so! If thou can'st dash aside the rich draught of Salome's love, with all its wealth of burning passion, for thee, and trample under foot her throbbing heart, for the cold solace of yon robber's creed, thou hast not loved!

MARIUS. Nay, Salome thou shalt hear! I love thee and would save thee!

SALOME. (Laughs bitterly) Save me? Ha! Ha! Fool! Save thyself and him! Save John, aye and thy Nazarine! For here I swear it! From this hour I am the foe of all thy brood! Aye thou shalt rue the day thou scorned'st the love of Salome, Princess of Galilee. (Exit L. 3.)

ANDREW. (Grasps Marius' hand) Friend, brother! Thou hast conquered!

MARIUS. Conquered? Nay, I have ruined thee and Him! have brought a blight upon the Holy cause! I would have saved.

ANDREW. Have faith, do right and leave the rest to heaven! She is the daughter of a king, but she hath not the power to hold, the arm of God!

MARIUS. Yet she hath power to crush His prophets!

ANDREW. But not to stem the full flood-tide of heaven's truth! Oh! take comfort, friend! Thou hast done well thy duty! God will do His part. (noise of laughter L) Hush! They are coming—I will wait without. Take hope.

MARIUS. I will! Hide thee without, among the shadows. I will try once more! (Andrew exits through C. Marius R. C. up stage. Enter guards, who stop up L. C. and C. ? Herod and Herodias, followed by Caiphas, Malchus, Longinus and others. Herod sits on throne L 2, Herodias at his feet. Herod flushed with wine wreathed with flowers.)

HEROD. Good friends, give up yourselves to revelry. Full way to joy tonight! This is the birth-day of your king.

ALL. Long live, King Herod!

HEROD. I would share my throne with Bacchus and Apollo! Let us have wine and song! (They serve him and guests.)

ALL. Good! Good! Long live the king!

MALCH. (Up C. Laughs) Ha! Ha! A rare jest! The captive yonder,—This John the Baptist is a Nazarite! Now, by their vow their lips may never taste the generous wine: Now he hath been thy guest so long in yonder dungeon, it were rare sport to see, if he would dare refuse to drain a bumper at the birth-day banquet of his King. (All but Marius Laughs.)

CAIPHAS. Aye, summon the fool. I pray thee! See if his prison hath not tamed his stubborn spirit.

MARIUS. (Indignantly) Nay, it were a shame to force this man to violate a vow of holiness!

MALCH. Ah, thou wilt see he hath lost faith in this Messiah that he prophesied. (All laugh) The Nazarine hath never visited this John in Prison, or done aught to rescue him! Faugh! where is the God-power that John proclaimed this Jesus hath?

CAIAPH. Long waiting hath so cooled his faith in the Nazarine, that he did send his followers to ask if He were the Messiah of the Jews, or were they to wait another.

MARIUS. I would stake my life on John's unshaken faith! (Herodias goes to Caiphas)

MALCH. Well, let us see! we pray thee, King, to show thy guests this long-haired prophet of the Jordan.

HEROD. Be it as ye will! Let him be brought. (Guards exit C arch and R. U.)

HERODIAS (To Caiaph.) Is it well they bring him hither?

CAIPH. Fear not! He will not mend his cause. He will still further anger Herod.

HERODIAS. Nay, I doubt! Herod is weak and wavereth.

CAIAPH. (With knowing smile) In all save passion for Herodias! Thou hast him there!

HERODIAS. How?

CAIAPH. Although he wavereth, one word of thine will bend him to thy will! I have a plan:—to have Salome dance before the King. Can'st thou rely on her?

HERODIAS. Yea, she hath quarreled with Marius. She is ripe for aught that can offend him.

CAIAPH. Good! He hath espoused the cause of John. Now thou shalt learn my plan, then call her to thee. See! He comes! (Enter John C. from R. U., pale and haggard, between two guards. Salome goes to Herodias.)

HEROD. This goodly company prevailed on us to summon thee. Thou art our guest. This is our birth-day. Thou shalt drain a golden cup of wine in honor of the King. (Pause.)

JOHN. The wine I drink is not of earth. It is the wine of heaven's love. My soul is sealed to God who careth for it and will keep it.

HEROD. What of thy Messiah-King that thou didst prophesy? Hath He visited thee in thy dungeon?

JOHN. Not as thou understandest it. His spirit abideth with me always.

HEROD. Is He still thy King?

JOHN. Aye, my King, and my Redeemer!

HEROD. And when will He ascend His throne?

JOHN. He is enthroned already in the hearts of multitudes of loving, loyal subjects!

HEROD. What answer made He then when thou didst send to ask if He indeed were God—King of the Jews?

JOHN. "Isaiah's prophesy hath been fulfilled. The sick are healed, the blind receive their sight, the lame do walk and the poor hear the gospel."

HEROD. Wilt thou rule with Him?

JOHN. Not here, but yonder! (points up) His a Kingdom, not of blood, but love. He shall yet rule the world.

ALL (Amazed) The world?

JOHN. Aye, all men shall flock to Him, all nations bow to Him; and He shall judge you all. May He have mercy on your souls!

CAIAPH. He hath gone mad! (Elizabeth enters C pauses.)

ELIZABETH. John. my 'son! (Rushes to his arms.)

JOHN. (Moved) Mother! why art thou here?

ELIZABETH. Because thou art, my son.

JOHN. Nay, dearest mother, I'd not have thee bring thy noble soul into this scene of wild debauch.

HEROD. How?

JOHN. She is my mother, King! Her heart is pure and Holy. This scene profaneth her as did Belchazzar's wine the Holy vessels of God's temple.

HEROD. (Rising) Away with him!

ELIZABETH. John!

JOHN. (Clasping her.) Farewell, my mother! I am in God's hands. May He keep thee until I meet thee there! (Points up.)

ELIZABETH. No, No, my boy! Stay! Oh King! Surely thou hast a heart! Oh! spare my boy and set him free!

HEROD. Tear them asunder! (bus.) Guards, away with him!

JOHN. (Up C.) Mother! I leave thee in God's care and in His son's! Farewell! (They drag him off C and R U)

ELIZABETH. (Kneels at Herod's feet.) Oh! Herod, hear me! Thou, a King! thou hast thy crown, thy throne, thy mighty realm: whilst I have but my son. Forgive my boy and set him free, and when thou kneel'st for judgment at that throne, where emperors themselves must sue for pardon, thy deed of mercy shall stand by thy side, like a bright angel there, to plead for thee.

HEROD. (Moved) I am but human! I would spare thy son but that he hath defied me!

MARIUS. Hear me, Oh Herod! the people love this man. To set him free would win their hearts to thee and Rome. If thou refusest this, thou knowest not what many-headed-monster thou mayest conjure up.

HEROD. (Musing) Aye, this is true; and now I need not foes.

ELIZABETH. 'Tis not defiance, Herod! 'Tis his love of man's immortal soul that makes him tell the plain, blunt truth, for thy soul's sake! He hath said what he hath, hoping for thy salvation, not from hate! 'Tis the intent that maketh every act and not the act itself. Should thy physician set for thee a broken bone, 'twere for thy healing and to do thee good; even though it gave thee pain.

HEROD. Yea, that is true!

ELIZABETH. So was his purpose kindly when he sought to be physician to thy soul.

HEROD. Woman, thy wish is granted! Come thou here at midnight, I will set him free.

ELIZABETH. (Joyously) Oh King! A mother's blessing and

its lustre to thy crown; and when thou suest for mercy there, (points up) may He remember thy good deeds, and be thy sins forgot! (She exits C)

HERODIAS. (Wildly to Caiaph) This shall not be! (Caiaph restrains her)

CAIAPH. (To Malch.) Quick! ply the King with wine! call for the dance! (Malch crosses to King) (To Salome) Go, dance before him! (She goes up C to Herodias) Be but patient thou shalt have revenge!

MALCH. Royal Herod! this scene but maketh sad thy feast! Let us have wine and song, laughter and dancing! Let us have the dance!

ALL. Aye, the dance! the dance!

HEROD. Be it so! The dance! (Malchus plies him with wine)

SALOME. (Comes forward, kneels at throne. Kisses his hand.) Oh, Royal Father! I will dance for thee!

ALL. The Princess! The Princess! Long live the Princess Salome! Long live King Herod! (She dances. King drinks with Malchus. At end of dance.)

ALL. (Shouting.) Long live the beautiful Salome!

HEROD. (Flushed with wine) Salome, child! Thou hast delighted us, and these our guests! Thou art the apple of mine eye! Ask of me what Thou wilt, and I will give it thee, 'een to the half of my kingdom!

ALL (Surprised) To half thy kingdom?

HEROD (Rising) Yea, I swear it by the Gods of Rome and by the God of Israel! Ask what thou wilt and I wilt give it thee! (Salome L of Herodias R.)

HERODIAS. (Grasps her wrist) The head of John the Baptist!

SALOME. Mother!

HERODIAS. 'Tis thy revenge upon Marius! John dead, and thou wilt win him back!

SALOME. Then be it so!

HEROD. Come child! What is thy wish?

SALOME (Kneels to him) Oh! Kingly Herod, thou hast sworn thy Royal oath to give me whatsoever I ask.

HEROD. (Caiaph. goes R of King) Yea, my Salome, that I swear!

SALOME. (Triumphantly) Thou'lt give me then, the head of John the Baptist!

MARIUS. (In horror.) Salome!

SALOME. (Looks triumphantly at him.) In a charger!

HEROD. (Rising.) Woman; Thou dost not know what thou demandest of me!

SALOME. Thy royal oath!

CAIAPH. (Near King.) The maid is right! The King's oath must be sacred!

HEROD. But the people?

CAIAPH. Thou hast sworn it by the God of Israel! Wouldst thou dare break that oath before the Jews?

HEROD. The people love this John. I fear their wrath!

CAIAPH. So much the more need then to stem this tide while yet we may lest it should overwhelm us.

MARIUS. Hear me, Oh, Herod!

SALOME. Wilt thou keep thine oath?

HEROD. Thy mother prompted thee to this!

HERODIAS. Yes! Darest thou, before thy guests, before thy people, break thine oath?

HEROD. (In rage) Woman! Thou art a fool! Thou, Thou hast forced me to this dangerous act! Have then thy will!

MARIUS. Herod, thou shalt hear me! This is savagery! Wouldst thou thus jeopardize thy throne?

CAIAPH. (Quickly interrupting him) To violate his oath by Israel's God would jeopardize his throne! King, give the word of death!

MARIUS. (Up C.) Then, be it so! I go to Pilate! This is Jerusalem, not Galilee! He can restrain thee, King! (Exits C. and R.)

HEROD. Longinus, see that this is done, and bring the head of John upon a charger! Mark me! When the sword hath fallen, let the bell toll that we may know this bloody deed is done! (Longinus exits C and R) Air! Air! I must have air! This troubles me! My oath! Oh, my oath! Come! (Herod rushes off L arch followed by all. Caiaphas and Herodias last gloating.)

(Tremulo pp enter Longinus and guards C from R U E with John. Picture.)

LONGINUS. Captive, it is Herod's will that thou shouldst die.

JOHN. (Pause Bus.) I had expected it! Well, I am prepared.

ANDREW. (Rushes in C) Master! (Falls on knees clasping John's hands, overcome.)

JOHN. Friend and brother! Father, I thank Thee for one loving hand to clasp, one gentle heart to fold to mine, in this, my parting hour.

ANDREW. Oh, hath it come to this? Our hopes, our fears, our prayers must end in darkness, in despair and death!

JOHN. In death, but not in darkness or despair! I know that my Redeemer liveth, and I pass from darkness into light!—from a dungeon to the splendor of the King of Kings!

ANDREW. (Wildly) Oh, JESUS of Nazareth, if thou art the Christ, save him and set him free!

JOHN. He is the Christ! The very God in man! He knoweth best! Let not thy faith in Him be shaken! I stand upon the utmost shore of life, and, gazing in the future, with prophetic eye, I know that I but go before. He too will die by violence, that men's souls may have eternal life! Go ye to Him, my followers! He is the Savior of the world!

ANDREW. Hast thou no message thou wouldst have me bear?

JOHN. Aye, tell the Master that my task is done! I have been faithful to the last! Tell my poor mother, that I died as I have lived, true to my faith and to her teachings! Oh, tell her to put her trust in Him, our Master! My blessing on her! I will wait them there!

LONGINUS. Make haste! My orders will not brook delay.

JOHN. Nay, I have done! But one thing I would ask of thee: when I am dead, I pray thee give this body to these loving ones, my mother and my friends, for burial.

LONGINUS. Thou art a brave man, friend, and thou shalt have thy wish, but come, for I must do my duty.

JOHN. Herod, fill full thy cup of sin, then thou shalt drain it to the bitter dregs! Mine is another life that thou hast sacrificed unto thine idol, lust! (Picture) (Clasps Andrew in arms) Our God be with thee brother! After the night, the morning;—after the darkness, cometh light! Be faithful! I will meet thee there!

(Points up)

LONGINUS. Come!

JOHN. (Bows head prays silently) I am ready! (Goes out erect and brave, R 3. Andrew goes up C looking after, John turns at entrance, gives silent blessing, Andrews bows head, they exit sadly C and R)

CAIAPH. (Enters triumphantly L. U. To C.) At last! Thus do I smite my foes! Thus dieth one who hath heaped scorn on the High Priest and all the learned men of Israel! Next for the other and more dangerous one! (Looks Off R. 3.)

MARIUS. (Rushing in C from R with document, meets Caiaph.) Hold! Stop this murder, I command you in the name of the Emperor! (Bell tolls out R.)

CAIAPH. (Smiles in triumph) Too late! That bell! The sword hath fallen!

MARIUS. (in despair) Dead! Too late! (Overcome) (Enter Herod hurried C from L followed by the rest. He starts to ascend the throne, but sinks on steps trembling. Herodias, Salome and Malchus go R 2)

HEROD. That bell!—Oh it is done! and he is dead!

MARIUS. Murderers! (All stand aghast)

HEROD. (Starts up) What! Darest thou?

MARIUS. Aye, I dare! Behold this order; 'Tis from Pilate. It bears the seal of Caesar! Thou didst o'er-step thy power when thou doomedest this man to death, here, in Jerusalem! I tell thee, Herod, to thy teeth, that thou hast murdered him!

ELIZABETH. (Entering C from L.) Murdered? Whom?

ALL (In horror) His mother!

ELIZABETH. His mother? Oh God! Not my son? my boy? Oh King! Not that! Not that!

MARIUS. (Fiercely) Yea, poor mother, the King lied to thee! poor mother, the King hath lied to thee! (All start. She sinks moaning at Marius' feet)

HEROD. (In rage) What? Lied?

MARIUS. Aye, lied and murdered! Nay, I fear thee not! What art thou with thy painted majesty? The puppet of the Emperor. (Longinus enters R 3, followed by the guards, bearing the head of John in a charger. Eliz. starts up, screams. She is restrained by guards.)

LONG. King, I have done thy bidding.

HEROD. (Averts face) (Disciples of John bearing his body, cross at back slowly from R to L exit)
Give it to her! (Points to Salome. Long. obeys. Salome gives it to Herodias.)

MARIUS. (To Salome) Thou fiend in human shape! (She smiles at him in scorn)

HERODIAS (Gazes at it triumphantly) Thus perish all Herodias' enemies! (Eliz. breaks from guards with a scream. Snatches the head and sinks with it on her knees moaning.)

ELIZ. Oh! My little son! My boy! Mine only child! Is this the little curling head that slept upon my breast Are these cold lips the lips that used to coo my name and set the seal of heaven's love upon my brow? Is this the end of all? My boy! My boy! (Sobs clasping head.)

MARIUS. Come poor mother: for thy woe, so sacred, is profaned here by the presence of his murderers. (Leading her up C.)

ELIZABETH. Stay but a little! (To Herod) Here me, assassin! Hear me, thou tigress, thou and thy savage whelp! And let my

words burn in your brains! Thou hast slain a Holy one,—a prophet of the living God! Thou hast poured out his life before yon idol of thy guilty blood-stained love! Thou shalt lose her, thy love, her child, thy throne and crown, and die alone, unwept, die like a dog, bereft of all, a maddened exile, in a far off land! And thou, Herodias, the murderess of my son: when thou shalt see her weltering in her blood,—when thy heart bursteth with its black despair, remember then Elizabeth!

HERODIAS. (With rage and fear.)

ELIZ. Mark me, ye murderers! The blood of John shall rise to haunt ye! Alone, in silence and at night, your sin-black souls shall start in mortal fear to hear the tolling of that fatal bell! And you, with horror-starting eyes, shall gaze into the gloom, and see a sight to turn your guilty hearts to stone! The dead, accusing face of John, the Baptist! (She holds it aloft, all cower in horror from her save Marius. Herod hides his face. Salome screams, kneels, hiding her face in Herodias' lap.)

HERODIAS. (Recovering, but in rage and terror.) Guards, seize her! (They start to obey)

MARIUS. (Swings her to left, behind him a little) Back slaves! Behold! (Touches her with the seal of the Royal order from Pilate.) the great seal of the emperor! Thus do I shield her with the might of Rome! (Picture and close in.)

SCENE 3.

(Dark change. Large padded rock run on in dark, R in I. Scene showing the sea of Galilee in distance. Signs of coming storm. Enter Elizabeth between Marius and Andrew, R, I. Leaning on their arms.)

ELIZABETH. The way is long and I am weary. The burden of my woe is more than I can bear.

MARIUS. Aye. Sit thee down upon this stone. The day is not so old, but we may rest awhile. The bitter anguish of this day has been too much for woman's strength to bear.

ELIZ. Oh, my boy! My noble boy! (Weeps.)

ANDREW. There is a spring hard by. I will fill our cup. I will go fill our cup. I will be back anon. (Exits L.)

MARIUS. Poor mother, be thou comforted! The Master's hand shall guide thee, and His strength support thee in thine hour of woe.

ELIZ. Yea, I will lean on Him, the Holy One! Herod may slay the body but, through Him, the soul shall have eternal life! John hath but gone before! JESUS himself will follow soon!

MARIUS. (surprised.) What sayest thou? The Christ will die?

ELIZ. (Phophetic.) Yea, hear me! In my loved one's death, my soul hath come so near the border-land of the eternal, it hath caught the inner meaning of it all,—the prophet's words,—the temple's sacrifice,—JESUS, the Christ, must die, even as John hath died, that, through his blood, our sins may be atoned. Else were the offerings on the altars of our God false and unmeaning!

MARIUS. (Musing.) The Christ must die!

ELIZ. Yea, but to conquer death! for, on the third day, He shall rise again, and, in His resurrection, we shall have life eternal! The while they slay Him, He shall triumph over them and death and sin! Remember this, my prophesy, in after time!

ANDREW. (Re-enters L with water) Thank thee, my son.

ANDREW. I would be to thee as a son, if thou wouldst let me, and guard thee with the tender care of him that's gone!

ELIZ. Good faithful heart! And so thou shalt! And I will be a

mother to thee, and guide thy steps, when thou wouldst wander from the paths of God!

MARIUS. Ah, gentle mother, I too would be thy son!

ELIZ. (Rises gives hand to each.) And so thou hast been, good Marius! I have not forgot thy brave protection, nor thy noble soul that gives up all for conscience's sake.

MARIUS. God's blessing on thee! Guide thou us, I pray, Elizabeth! Be thou our mother in our holy faith and we will be thy sons! (Picture.)

ELIZ. Aye, be it so, my children! We must go, or we shall not reach JESUS ere the night-fall. The way was long, but I am rested now. Besides, your words have comforted my soul.

ANDREW. (Looks off L.) Who cometh yonder?

NICODEMUS. (Enters L I) Greeting, friends!

ALL. Greeting, Rabbi Nicodemus!

MARIUS. Whither comest thou?

NICODEMUS. From yonder hills, beside the sea of Galilee,—I went to learn of Him,—that mighty prophet, JESUS, the Nazarine.

ELIZ. We go to seek Him, bearing our load of pain.

NICODEMUS. Of pain? Ah, thou art the mother of the prophet John? they call the Baptist.

ELIZ. Aye, I was.

NICOD. Thou wast?

ELIZ. Rabbi, my boy is dead!

NICODEMUS. (Astonished.) Dead?

MARIUS. (Fiercely.) Yea, murdered by King Herod, but to please his royal wanton and her murderess child, Salome!

NICOD. Salome?

MARIUS. Aye, we have not the heart to tell thee now. Thou wilt hear all there, in Jerusalem.

NICOD. (Bitterly.) Oh God of Israel! When wilt thou free my country from the bloodred rule of Rome?

MARIUS. I am a Roman but I blame thee not! The curses of all men with hearts fall on those monsters, Herod and his brood!

ELIZ. Nay, curse them not, my son! Leave them to God! His curse will smite them soon and bitterly enough!—My son! My son!

NICOD. (Moved.) Poor, noble John!

ANDREW. We, his disciples, and these loving ones have laid his body in the tomb; and now, with aching hearts, we seek the Master here to tell Him that His faithful friend is dead!

NICOD. He hath been preaching to the people yonder. He sent forth His disciples on a ship, to cross the lake to yonder point; meanwhile He went apart, into the hills, to pray. You'll find Him there, (points L at back.) Your heavy tidings weigh me down. I bear with me part of your load of grief. But I must hasten towards Jerusalem. The gates will close at night-fall, and the way is long. I fear a coming storm. (Crosses R) Heaven send to your poor hearts His blessing and His balm!

MARIUS. We go to Him, JESUS the Christ: He is heaven's balm to wounded hearts and stricken souls!

NICOD. (Surprised) What? Thou, Marius? Thou, a Roman? Believest thou in Him?

MARIUS. Yea, I believe!

NICOD. Thank God, thou too hast seen the light! Farewell, good friends!

ALL. Farewell! (Exit Nicod. R I).

ELIZ. Come. Let us find Him. I shall know no rest till I have

told Him all; for He alone can give our spirits peace: That gentle, mighty heart, that soon will bear the sorrows of a world! (Exeunt L I. Change of lights. Vision of the sea of Galilee in night and storm, waves rolling, thunder and lightning, wind. The ship with disciples. enters R. 2 Sail bellying in gale, working oars, crosses L C. Christ appears on the sea, approaches ship during song sung by invisible chorus.) "'Tis I be not afraid." Till life size and near ship at curtain.

Second picture. Chorus repeats. Peter sinking, Christ with hands stretched toward him.

ACT 2.

Scene I., Interior of Herod's palace. Opening C, arches R and L C, Curtained doors R and L 2. Malch. enters C at rise, from gardens.

MALCH. So, I am here before mine uncle Caiphas. Well, perchance t'will serve my purpose. I am not blind to mine own fortune, and, mayhap, out of the fair Salome's anger at that Roman fool, I may find means to win her and so pave the way for mine own rise. Ah, hush! (He retires R. C. in curtains. Salome enters D. L. 2.

SALOME. There, I am alone! The chatter of my women frets me! Their music jars discordant on mine ears! Oh, I can take no joy, no rest! (Up at C. arch.) With hungry heart, like yonder captive tigers in the pits, I pace with ceaseless, restless tread; a savage captive in the narrow bound of mine own bitter thoughts! Nay, I will blot him from my memory! I will be free again, free! This love-hate of Marius is the chain that festereth in my flesh! I'll break it! Ha, ha, ha! (Reclines on couch R. C.) Shall I let anger eat my heart out for a fool that flung away a princess' love to flock with beggars! (Malchus advances) Ha! Thou!

MALCH. Princess Salome! Loveliest of women, greeting and homage to thee! (Kneels.)

SALOME. (Coldly.) Are these the manners of Judea, to force thyself, unasked and unannounced into the presence of a daughter of the KING?

MALCH. Nay, gentle princess. I but wait thy father's royal pleasure

SALOME. The King's pleasure?

MALCH. Yea, Princess. He hath summoned mine uncle, the High Priest Caiphas, to counsel on affairs of state; and me to tell what I have learned of this new-risen leader of the people.

SALOME. What the Nazerine?

MALCH. Yea, lady, the people follow Him like mad, and the followers of John have turned to Him, and, with them, the noble Marius.

SALOME. (With contempt) The noble Marius! the mess-fellow of the swinish rabble!

MALCH. (Eagerly.) He was not worthy of thy love!

SALOME. What sayest thou?

MALCH. To turn from such a love as thine for the wild teachings of a mad ascetic! To give up heaven for a wilderness, a barren desert! None but a fool would make such a barter! Oh, did I—

SALOME. Well, say on, "didst thou?"

MALCH. Did I but win one glance of those star eyes, one smile from those red, maddening lips, I should go mad with joy! Salome, I would give eternity for but one hour of thy love!

SALOME. Slave, knowest who I am and who thou art? Thou art of that base trickster's brood, that bought the sacred office for its perquisites, its plunder, like a low publican! I am the daughter of a hundred kings!

MALCH. Aye, but a slave may worship at a goddess' feet! I am not like that Roman—boor, Marius—

SALOME. No, thou art not indeed!

MALCH. A fool! A dolt! Fit comrade for the scum of Galilee.

SALOME. (Starts up) Well, hast thou said I let thee run thy tether's end. Thou fawning cur! Were he in power, thou'ldst lick his sandals!, thou filth! Thou art more base than is the basest wretch that he consorteth with, conceited fool! (Up C.) Seest thou yon tiger pits? If thou dost ever breathe his name again, or raise thine eyes to mine (at C. arch) my slaves shall fling thee, howling, to those savage beasts to tear! And now thou knowest who I am and what thou art! (Exit D. L.)

MALCH. Aye, spoiled and petted fool, I know! I know! I bide the time. I need thee as a stepping ston, and I will never rest till I have climbed into thy heart! And thou remember this; the snake may crawl to where the lion can not leap. A hundred Kings? Ha! Ha! Thy sire is but a toy king, a manikin, the plaything of the Emperor, his crown a hollow shell of royalty, his sceptre but a bauble and he a gaud-bedizzened slave of Caesar! Thou knowest not the patient, tireless, subtle. Malchus! This turmoil of the people—Ha! mine uncle! (Caiphas enters C.)

CAIAP. Ah, Malchus, thou? And art thou here already? What ails thee? Thou art all a tremble!

MALCH. Nay, uncle, it's but my eagerness to serve thee and the King. This Nazerine hath grown so mighty that he——

CAIAPH. That we needs must crush him. We have silenced John the Baptist, and behold one mightier than he hath risen in his stead. He too, must be destroyed. We must bend Herod—(Herod enters hurriedly. R. D.)

MALCH. Hush, the King!

CAIAPH. Our homage, King Herod!

HEROD. My thanks, good friends! Rabbi Caiphas I have sent for thee on matter of deep import, for I need thy wisdom. Since the head of John hath fallen, mine own hath not lain well upon my pillow. A horror haunteth me by night and day, the dread fear of that mad mother's curse. "The blood of John shall rise up to accuse thee!" Oh! I hear it even now, ever and always."

CAIAPH. Nay, King, thou art o'erwrought. 'Twas but the ravings of one crazed with grief.

HEROD. Nay, I fear! this Nazerine! He worketh wonders never wrought by living man! My heart misgives me! Is he not that John, returned to life, to do these wondrous things?

CAIAP. Nay, nay! I bid thee calm thy fears! This John was herald of the Nazerine, and had, himself baptized Him, in the Jordan, ere his own bold, bitter tongue lost him his head, most justly, at thine hands.

HEROD. Caiphas, let us not deceive ourselves! This man but spoke the truth!

CAIAP. Nay, Royal Herod, thou art not a common man! The moral laws that hem the common herd, apply not to the majesty of kings! Enough of this! John was but a disturber of the people and a scorner of the king. 'Twere needful he should die! And now another hath risen, more powerful than he! More dangerous! He

is a mighty leader, too, of men! He hath miraculous powers too, that make them dumb with wonder; aye, and most dangerous to thee, and us,—they call Him the Messiah,—the expected King and Liberator of the Jews!

HEROD. (anxiously.) The King of Israel?

CAIAP. Yea, of all Israel,—of Judea and of Galilee, thy kingdom too, as well! Now we must check his power.

HEROD. My hands are red, already, with the blood of John! Is there no other way?

CAIAP. None, King! He, that hath power, be he king or priest, holdeth that man his foe who laboreth to wrest that power from him! Let him crush his foe or meekly bow his own neck to be crushed.

HEROD. I dread this step! The danger is not yet so great but we may wait.

CAIAP. 'Twere wise to stem the tide while yet we may! As thou hast said, Oh King! "Let us be honest with each other!" Be it so! The people love us not! Thou art not of the House of David. this Man is! Thou art of Rome and representist its power. That power the people hate. I am not, by inheritance, High Priest, but I have bought the office of the conquerors. The rabble know of this and hate me, in their hearts. They joyed when the Nazarine drove out the money-changers from the Temple, partly because it touched my perquisites and revenues! This bold-tongued Nazarine teareth away the rich robes of our power, and showeth us deformed and naked, to the rabble! a target for their scorn! The man must die!

HEROD. I fear the people, if we seize Him publicly. But let us hear the counsellors whom we expect!

CAIAP. They are in my hands, and can be moulded to my will!

MALCH. (up C.) They wait your royal pleasure.

HEROD. (sits on chair R. Caiap. stands R. Nicodemus and four others of the Sanhedrim, enter C. & come down L, after salaam to Herod. Malch. up R. C.)

CAIAPH. (aside.) Nicodemus here? How did he learn of this?

HEROD. Most welcome, learned Doctors of the Law! We need your wisdom in a cause that toucheth you and us most nearly. I mean our common enemy, the Nazarine! Proceed, then, with the Council!

CAIAP. Most Gracious and August, these elders and wise men have sought Him out to learn His teachings and His claims. Let them be heard.

HEROD. Yea, be it so!

CAIAP. Malchus, what hast thou learned?

MALCH. (C.) We went, as thou didst bid us, with the multitudes that followed Him. He entered in the house, and, when the throng was gathered, they lowered through the roof, a man, stricken with palsey. Gazing on him, He said: "Thy sins be forgiven thee! "We thought, among ourselves,—“And doth this man pretend to be a god that he forgiveth sins?” He read our thoughts; and, looking straight at us, He said: “That ye may know the Son of Man hath power on Earth to forgive sins, behold!” Then said He to the palsied one:—“Take up thy bed and walk!” And instantly the man obeyed and passed among us, wondering, to his house, healed of his palsey!

CAIAP. His word were blasphemous!

NICOD. His miracle was God-like! Wait!

MALCH. At Nazareth, He said so boldly that He was the One

Divine, of whom the Prophets spake, that, in their rage, the people cast Him from the Synagogue, and took Him to the summit of a cliff to dash Him down to death.

NICOD. Yea, and some mystic power staid them, and He walked unharmed through the angry throng and did depart, for no man there could raise his hand to do Him harm!

BARANNAS. He's a false Prophet! He eateth with the publicans and sinners. He profaneth the Sabbath!

MALCH. Yea. We saw Him heal him of the withered hand, even in the Synagogue, upon the Sabbath!

NICOD. How can one, who is a sinner, do such miracles?

BARANNAS. Miracles? Ha, ha! He hath a devil!

NICOD. These are not the works of him that hath a devil! Doth the Devil do good? Can a devil ope the eyes of the blind?

BARANNAS. Faugh, Nicodemus! Be thou not a fool! Thou art, thyself blind! He hath closed thine eyes! This fellow casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the Prince of Devils!

NICOD. Thus spakest thou to Him! What answer made He? "Doth the Devil cast out himself? Doth he undo his own works?" Barannas, thou art like the viper, blind, and drunk with thine own bitter venom! He is the prophet of the Eternal God!

CAIAP. Beware! Take heed now, to thyself, lest thou blaspheme!

NICOD. Beware, Oh Priest, lest thou defy that God thou dost pretend to serve!

CAIAP. What sayest thou?

NICOD. Each act against this Nazarine is blackest blasphemy! Take heed, proud man, lest thou destroy the light and hope of Israel!

CAIAP. Who bade thee to our council? By what right—

NICOD. What right? The right of birth and place! I am a member of the greater council, the Sanhedrim! A right! I did inherit from my father! I have not bought it of the Roman!

CAIAP. Ha! Tremble, lest my rage—

NICOD. I tremble at God's anger, not at thine!

HEROD. Peace! Hath this man of Nazareth said aught of treason against Rome?

MALCH. We tried to trap Him there, but He hath baffled us. We asked Him: "Is it lawful to pay tribute money unto Caesar?" Reading our purposes, He said: "Show me a penny!" I gave to him. "Whose image and whose superscription are these?" Asked He. "Caesar's!" We said. And then, with eyes of fire, He answered us: "Give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's!"

.....BARANNAS. Since this Galilean fellow, this carpenter's son, hath raised this Lazarus of Bethany, from the dead, even at the Gates of Jerusalem, the people have gone mad; and all the multitudes come with the eager question on their lips: "Where's he the Nazarine raised from death, and where the mighty Prophet that hath done these things?"

NICOD. They are much wiser than are ye, ye learned Doctors of the Law! They know that none may cleanse the leper, heal the blind or raise the dead save by the power of the very God!

BARANNAS. Thou art a fool! Hath He not held us up to scorn? He is our foe!

NICOD. He is the foe of sin if found in palace or in hovel! If ye are habitations, then, of evil, cleanse ye your house of the corrup-

tion! Was Jonathan the foe of David when he told his friend his fault?

HEROD. Enough of bickerings! This man is a disturber and a menace to our state!

CAIAP. He hath been warned of danger, and so cometh not here to Jerusalem.

MALCHUS. Nay! Hear the rest! He and His twelve disciples are coming to the Passover!

BARANNAS! What, to Jerusalem? We have Him then!

HEROD. Not so. We dare not seize Him publicly, fearing the people. It would raise revolt.

BARANNAS. Oh, we shall find the means! Fear not!

CAIAP. This movement of the masses, here, led by the Nazarine, is dangerous and must be crushed or it will be the ruin of us,—us, the ruling class; and, in the end, Judaism and the Nation! It were better that one man should die than that the nation's self should perish.

NICOD. Brothers! Elders of Israel, hear me! Take heed lest ye, yourselves, should seal your country's doom! For ye destroy Israel if ye destroy the Hope of Israel! Oh, be not blind! Can ye not see this Nazarine is God's own Prophet, and the Hope of Israel? What Prophet hath done works like these? In Him ye see fulfilled the words of all the prophets gone before. Oh, be not mad! Heed not this trickster's words!

CAIAP. Trickster?

NICOD. Aye, trickster that did buy his sacred office and profane it, to turn the Temple of the Living God into a low, base huckster's mart for sordid gain! That warpeth Truth into a lie, and setteth up himself defiant, against the God of Israel!

HEROD. Ha! What is this? Is then our Royal Presence a place for brawls and quarrels? Enough of this!

NICOD. Nay, I have done! Look to thyself, Caiaphas, lest thou be a traitor to thy native land! (Exit C.)

CAIAP. Anathema upon the meddling fool! How came he here?

MALCH. I know not how. Our council was held secret.

BARANNAS. He is a sentimental fool! He drives me mad!

CAIAP. Not thee alone! I'll crush him!

MALCH. How canst thou? He is the friend of Pilate, under his protection.

HEROD. (Testily.) Of Pilate? Ha! Pluto take Pilate and his friends!

CAIAP. But of this matter of the Nazarine! What's to be done? We dare not seize Him openly. The people love Him.

BARANNAS. Bah! This makes me mad! Why dally thus? Kill Him!

CAIAP. Aye, but how?

BARANNAS. A blow upon the head,—a knife-thrust in the dark! There are a thousand ways!

CAIAP. Thou sayest easily! But who will do it?

BARANNAS. (drawing dagger.) I will!

ALL. Thou?

BARANNAS. Yea, I! I hate Him! Did He not o'erthrow our markets in the Temple? Well, that day I swore I'd kill Him, and I will!

CAIAP. Then do it, and at once, and make an end of this! When thou hast slain Him, come thou back to us! We will wait thee

here; but see thou kill the Nazarine! (Barannas, with dagger, goes toward C. Arch, meets Elizabeth, & falls back to L.)

HEROD. (half rising in terror.) That woman!

ELIZABETH. Stay, murderers! I know your plan!

CAIAP. Thou Hag! Begone! The Curse of the Temple—

ELIZABETH. Hear me, Caiaphas! Thou art now High Priest, the foremost man in Israel; but the day cometh when before yon temple, a brutish Roman soldier shall cleave thy proud head in twain and kick thy bleeding carcass in the ditch to rot like a dead dog!

BARANNAS. Ha, ha, ha! Thou poor, mad fool! Thou witch! Thou sooth-sayer! Tell thou my fortune!

ELIZABETH. Aye, I will tell thee, wretch! The curse of leprosy shall smite thee; and, piece by piece, thy flesh shall fall away; and every man shall shrink with shuddering, from thy touch! The throng shall fall apart before thee, and thou shalt walk alone, a living death!

BARANNAS. (throws back head-cloth & starts at her.) Thou liest, Hag!

ELIZABETH. (points to his brow.) Look, men of Israel! Even now! Mark ye the white spot on his brow!

BARANNAS. (staggers back and clutches his head.) My God!

ELIZABETH. The Curse hath fallen!

ALL. (gather up mantles & shrink away from him.) Room for the leper!

BARANNAS. (goes up, horror & despair on his face, turns stretches out hands in mute appeal to them, they wave him away, he goes up to C. arch, dazed, and cries, as if warning those ahead, Room for the Leper! Room! (Picture and change of scene.)

SCENE 2. Outside the Walls of Jerusalem.

(Enter PETER & JOHN, the Disciple.)

PETER. There lieth Jerusalem, the Holy City! Once more we gaze upon her glory!

JOHN. Yea, brother; but this time, with aching hearts; for now the Master saith He hath come up to meet His death! (enter Judas R.)

PETER. Ah, Judas! Welcome!

JUDAS. Whither goest thou?

PETER. The Master sendeth us to yonder village of Bethphage, and saith: "There ye shall find a she-ass and her foal. Go, bring her hither, and if any man should ask you aught, say ye to him: "The Master needeth her!" and he shall suffer you."

JUDAS. Where is the Master?

PETER. He bideth at the house of Simon, there. He that was called the leper, till the Master healed him of his leprosy. And Lazarus and his sisters too are there.

JUDAS. Why goeth He up to Jerusalem? He knoweth the Levites the Sanhedrim, wait to seize Him.

PETER. He goeth to the Passover.

JUDAS. Knoweth He not His danger?

JOHN. Yea, He doth indeed! There lieth our sorrow! Did he not foretell that they should seize and slay Him, but that, upon the third day, He should rise again?

JUDAS. Why doth He go there then? Faugh! 'Tis but this: He knoweth now that He is conquered!

PETER. What sayst thou, Judas?

JUDAS. Why, this: the people would have made Him King of Israel, but He would none of it! And now His power waneth and He did foresee His fall! He might have saved Himself and us!

PETER. Oh thou of little faith! Hast thou not seen Him bid the tempest to be still and it obeyed Him? Did He not walk upon the sea and it upheld Him? Thinkest thou He could not still the tempest! in their hearts if so He willed? Or that the Power that bore Him up, upon the sea, could not cast down His enemies, beneath His feet, that they might not engulf Him?

JUDAS. But if the Rabbi were the great Messiah, why took He not the crown of Israel, while yet He might?

PETER. While yet, sayst thou? His power, with the people, groweth day by day! They flock to see the Mighty One who raised Jairus' daughter and called back from death the buried Lazarus! While yet, indeed!

JUDAS. If He were the Messiah, would He not be King? And if he hath failed why doth He not foretell His death? and not His coronation?

JOHN. That is not for us to know. He knoweth best! Why questionst thou His will?

JUDAS. Submission, and not triumph, is defeat! It is His power I question.

PETER. What, thou dost doubt His power? Thou, who hast seen Him raise the dead and heal the sick and cast out devils? Oh, blind! Oh faithless! Thou wilt see!

JUDAS. (hotly.) See what? see Him, we thought our king, go down into defeat and death, and there's an end!

JOHN. The end? Nay, nay! Hath He not said in three days he shall rise again?

JUDAS. Ah, thou wilt see! He cannot!

PETER! Doubter! Remember Lazarus! Did He not raise the dead?

JUDAS. Yea, but not Himself! And more! He will not!

JOHN. Oh thou of little faith, to doubt His promises!

JUDAS. Ye are of Galilee and cannot understand. I am a Jew, and I have faith in Judea's Prophets. I thought He was the long-looked-for Messiah, who should rule Israel, even as the Prophets told;—that we, His friends, should share His glory and not His defeat, and, possibly, His death! I thought, through Him, we should be honored of all men, and not their scoff and jeer.

PETER. Thou wouldst not say these things to Him! Thou art but luke-warm and unworthy to be His disciples!

JUDAS. (hotly.) This to me? I am more worthy than thou art, or than the rest, for that! I am a Jew! Ye are but Galileans!

PETER. The Master soon shall hear of this! Thou art His enemy!

JUDAS. (meekly.) Nay, nay! Thou wrongst me! I am His friend and would not see Him die. I seek His glory, not His shame,—His death! I would feign see Him King!

JOHN. He knoweth the Father's business, Who art thou to change the Master's plan? Enough for us to know it is His will! Leave all to Him!

JUDAS. (with injured air,) Oh, as ye will! Ye cannot understand and will misjudge me! Go your ways! I'll say no more!

JOHN. If we misjudged thee, Judas, 'twas thy fault. We judged thee by thy words.

PETER. We did not misjudge him! "Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh!"

JUDAS. (meekly) Let it pass! Forget what I have said!

PETER. Come, John! We'll go into the village, yonder and do the Masters' bidding. Come! (exeunt R.)

JUDAS. (fiercely.) Aye, go, ye fools! I am not blind, if ye are! This the end of all! I, who had hoped to be the Treasurer of the King, rich, honored, great! Why I must be content to keep the paltry pence, the rabble give to use for charity, and squeeze what petty gain I may, unnoticed, from the bag when I should have the handling of a royal treasure! Faugh! It driveth me to madness! And this John, the Beloved! A Galileean! A fisherman! And he, forsooth, must be the favored one, whilst I, the Rabbi's countryman, I, of Judea, like He,—why I must stand aloof, as though unworthy! Bah! He's not a Prophet of the Jews! He giveth, too, His gospel to the gentile dogs! (Enter MALCHUS L.)

MALCH. Ah, Judas! Is it thou? So, thou art back again, nigh to Jerusalem.

JUDAS. Yea, I am come up to the Passover.

MALCH. And art thou still disciple of the Nazarine?

JUDAS. Yea.

MALCH. Ah, I had hoped that thou wert cured of thy folly.

JUDAS. Folly? Humph! Thou know'st not what thou sayst!

MALCH. (facetiously.) No? Well, art thou not a Jew? And dost thou not give up thy birth-right thus to flock with Galileans? Thou didst have bright prospects here, my friendship and my influence too, for thine advancement. Thou dost fling it all away to follow, like at cur at heel, this Nazarine imposter!

JUDAS. Imposter? What sayest thou to His miracles?

MALCH. Oh, tush! Hath He not failed?

JUDAS. Failed?—In what?

MALCH. He is not the Messiah, else would He now be king! I say that He hath failed, and, if thou art not all a fool, thou'lt save thyself and wilt regain the favor of the priests!

JUDAS. Have done! And when I need thy wisdom, I'll borrow from thee; but, till then, I'll use mine own! 'Twill do as well!

MALCH. (going R.) Oh, as thou wilt! I sought to be thy friend. Go, tell thy Nazarine to teach thee patience! And since thou art so fiery, when thy down-fall happeneth, come not to me to shield thee! Go, look elsewhere for a friend! Ha, ha, ha! (exit R.)

JUDAS. Yea, he is right! I am a fool! But I will make one trial more! I'll to the house of Simon. If He still prefereth death to triumph, He may die alone! I will not share His ruin! (exit L)

(Enter MARIUS & ANDREW & people R. Salome, veiled and cloaked, skulks R. on edge of crowd.)

MARIUS. Who is that, yonder, that, but now, parted with Malchus?

ANDREW. His name is Judas Iscariot.

MARIUS. I thought so too! A silent, somber fellow. Andrew, I do not like that man!

ANDREW. Nay, he is a disciple of the Master,—one of the twelve.

MARIUS. But still, I trust him not! He hath a selfish and dishonest look!

1st CITIZEN. That was one Malchus, nephew to Caiaphas.

2nd. CITIZEN. Yea! He and his uncle, the High Priest, conspired with that brood of Hell, Herod and her, that was his brother's wife, and that serpent, Salome, to slay the holy Prophet, John, the Baptist!

1st CIT. May the curse of blood fall on the House of Herod!
(Noise L.)

ANDREW. What is that tumult?

2nd. CIT. Caiaphas and the priests have taken an adultress, in her sin, and they are dragging her away. She will be stoned to death!

ANDREW. That hypocrite, Caiaphas, were she of royal blood, he'd fawn and flatter her! Why doth he not first stone Herodias, the queen?

1st CIT. Because he is a sycophant and coward! He feareth Herod, the Adulterer!

ANDREW. Yea, and he useth her, Salome, to do his murders for him!

MARIUS. Monsters all! The curse of innocent and holy blood fall on them!

SALOME. (throws off disguise & springs C.) Oh ye curs! Ye shall wash out that insult with your blood! Ye swine!

ANDREW! Salome! (enter ELIZABETH L.)

CROWD. Salome, the Murdress! (They rush at her, she screams and falls L. C.)

MARIUS. (Catching her in arms.) Back! Remember, she's a woman!

ELIZ. (C.) Leave her to Heaven's justice!

CROWD. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth! "Kill her! Kill her!

ELIZ. Hear me! The Lord hath said it!" "Vengeance is Mine! I will repay!"

CROWD. She murdered John, the Baptist!

ELIZ. I am his mother, and I bid you let her go her way! Bitter enough will be her punishment!

1ST CIT. Her time hath not yet come; but then it will!

CROWD. Well, we will wait! (they exit L. muttering:—We bide our time! There'll come a time, &c.)

ELIZ. Come, Andrew! I would spare her life; but I cannot forget she slew my son! I cannot meet her! Come! (they exit L. Salome slowly recovers.)

SALOME. Ha! Have they gone? What, thou? (he has seated her L)

MARIUS. (crosses R. C.) Yes!

SALOME. (tenderly.) And thou didst save me?

MARIUS. No, not I! It was the mother of the one that thou slewest!

SALOME! (amazed) Elizabeth!

MARIUS. Yea, I had naught to do with it!

SALOME. Thou didst! Marius, oh, forgive me!

MARIUS. Go, Murdress! Go, ask that poor mother to forgive thee if she can!

SALOME. (sadly.) Thou loathest me!

MARIUS. Yea, as I loathe a poisonous snake!

SALOME. Hear me, Marius! Despite thine hate, thy loathing, I love thee! I love thee! If thou wilt but forgive and pity me, then thou mayst slay me after! See! I give my bosom to thy dagger! Strike!

MARIUS. If thou hadst slain my brother, I'd not strike thee!—Thou'rt a woman!

SALOME. (Wildly.) Marius! Oh, my love,—my life! Oh! Pity me!

MARIUS. What pity didst thou show to him or his poor mother? Ask it of Heaven! Give thy life to deep remorse and penitence!

SALOME. Ah, thou hast never loved me!

MARIUS. (starts fervently.) Never loved thee? There was a time when thou were all to me! I thought thee, then, a being all of love and tenderness, wild-eyed and graceful as is the gazelle, and yet as sweet and gentle! It was but a dream! And oh, the cruel waking! Behold my fair gazelle had changed into a blood-smeared monster! That instant, in my heart Love died, and, in her place, rose Horror!

SALOME. My crime sprang from my love. Oh, then, for Love's dear sake, forget my crime! Forgive it!

MARIUS. I cannot forget!

SALOME. Forgive and pity then! My life, without thy love, is as a desert waste! I cannot live without thee!

MARIUS. (sternly.) This, then, be portion of thy punishment; to know thy crime hath blotted from thy life all that once made it worth the living! Leave me!—(crosses L.)

SALOME. (crossing R. pleading.) Marius!

MARIUS. Go! Pray thou to Heaven! This is not penitence, 'tis passion! Go! and may I never look upon thy face again!

SALOME. Nay, spare me! I will trouble thee no more! (going R.) My heart! My heart! (exits R.)

MARIUS. (looking after her.) Oh, fair! Oh, beautiful! Hadst thou not dyed thine hands in holy blood, hadst thou but been the gentle, clinging, loving creature that I thought thee, I'd not have bartered thy sweet love, no! Not for the crown of Caesar! I thought thee a fair, faultless nymph and loved thee! But when I saw the deadly thoughts that twined, like serpents, round thy brows, mine eyes were opened and I saw the Gorgon that hath turned my heart to stone! (enter PILATE & GUARDS L.)

PILATE. Ah, Marius, welcome! (to guards.) Wait for me yonder! We would be alone. (Exit Guards R.) Marius, thou knowest well I am thy friend.

MARIUS. (warmly.) A friend? Thou hast been almost as a father to me!

PILATE. So have I tried to be! and, therefore, have I earned the right to counsel thee. Wilt thou, then, listen to thy friend with patience?

MARIUS. Yea, that I will! Say on!

PILATE. The purest, proudest blood of Rome flows in thy veins. Thine is an old Patrician family, without a stain of base, Plebian taint. Thou art a kinsman of the Emperor!

MARIUS. (smiling.) Well, true; but from this pedigree, what counsel springeth?

PILATE. Thou art my trusted friend!

MARIUS. Yea, to the death, if need be!

PILATE. I put some certain Galilean rabble to the sword, here in Jerusalem. 'Because these dogs of Galilee were his own subjects, Herod did complain of me to Caesar. There's a feud between us that I feign would heal.

MARIUS. Thou wouldst be friends with Herod?

PILATE. Yea. Not that I love him! 'Twixt ourselves, he is a weak and vacillating coward! A dupe to flatterers, and Herodias' slave! Still, as we hold our power but at Caesar's will, there hangeth ever, o'er our heads, the Sword of Damocles, but by a sin-hair! For our own safety we must be allied.

MARIUS. What wouldst thou have of me?

PILATE. Thy father was my friend, and thou art as a son to me. Now I would have thee heal this feud, and, at the same time, win a throne and crown!

MARIUS. How sayest thou?

PILATE. This Herod hath no son.

MARIUS. I do not understand thee!

PILATE. Oh, these lovers! The fair Salome!

MARIUS. (quickly) What of her?

PILATE. She loveth thee! (Marius starts to speak, he checks him.) There! I know these lovers' quarrels! Trust me, my friend! When Herod dieth, thou art King of Syria! Thou must wed her!

MARIUS. Never! Though 'twere to be King of Asia! 'Twas she who murdered John, the Prophet!

PILATE. Tush! And what is that to us? An Israelitish dog! One more or less, what matters it?

MARIUS. He was the Prophet of the living God!

PILATE. Faugh! What are these Jewish curs to us? Our vassals! Slaves! In Rome, we'd throw them to the Colosseum lions, but for our sport! What care we for their savags superstitions? Are we not Romans? We, we pray to Jupiter and all the gods of Rome!

MARIUS. Aye, I did once; but now mine eyes are opened! There is a higher, holier, purer faith, taught by the gentle Nazarine!

PILATE. Marius, art thou mad? Is not thy sister Flavia a holy Vestal, and doth not thy noble mother pray to all the gods of Rome to guard her boy? Have not Jove's eagles led the swords of Rome through every savage land, unto the farthest sea?

MARIUS. Yea, and the teaching of this Holy One shall follow where the swords of Rome hath led!

PILATE. Oh, thou dost madden me! I have no patience with thee! Oh degenerate! Thine ancestors have been the foremost men of Rome for now four hundred years! Wouldst thou prove recreant to her gods to follow this poor Nazarine?

MARIUS. Aye, poor indeed! But, mark me well! The day will come when, o'er Rome's seven-hilled splendor, gleameth the glory of this Son of God! (exits L.)

PILATE. (alone,) The boy hath lost his wits! I'll send him back to Rome! Once there, he'll soon forget this folly of the Nazarine! This way-side teacher hath a mighty power that swayeth all men's hearts! I cannot understand it! (exits R.)

CAIP. & MOB out R.) Away with her! Down with her! The Adultress! (they drag on Mary Magdalene C. CAIAP. MALCH. & the Levites.)

CAIAPHAS. Thou outcast! Thou Adultress! Thou hast been taken in thy very sin! Thou knowest the law! Thou shalt be stoned to death!

MARY M. (kneeling C.) Mercy! Have mercy!

CAIAP. We are not here for mercy but the law!

CROWD. Stone her! Stone her!

CAIAP. Yea, she is guilty and she shall be stoned to death!

CROWD. The High Priest hath given sentence! Stone her! Stone her!

MALCH. Stay, Uncle! Take her to the Nazarine!

CAIAP. What meanest thou?

MALCH. Canst thou not see? Use her to trap Him! If He let her go, He holdeth not the Law and is no Jew!

CAIAP. Thou sayest wisely, Malchus! Speak! What think ye, brethren?

LEVITES. Yea! Take her to Him! We have Him now! Ha, ha, ha!

MALCH. (seizing her roughly.) Come, woman! Come! They drag her off L. with shouts.) Stone her! Away with her! (PAUSE—Enter JUDAS L.)

JUDAS. Anathema upon them! He hath humbled me, me! and before them all! Before her whom I love! Her, Lazarus' fair sister, Mary! Oh, my blood is fire! She hath no eyes for me; but gazeth ever at Him, with those looks of worship! When, but now, she did anoint His hair, His feet with precious ointment, it drove me wild with jealousy! When I cried out: "'Tis waste! It's price should have gone in our treasury, (taps bag.) to feed the poor!" Why, He rebuked me! I could see the scorn in her dark eyes! It drove me mad! I hate Him now, and I forswear allegiance to Him! I will not rest till I have my revenge! (exit R.)

(Enter Caiap. Malch. & Levites, grumbling and baffled, followed by Andrew, Eliz. & Mary Magdalene. L.)

CAIAP. (R. C. to Malch.)—This is thy folly, boy! He hath outwitted us!

LEVITE. And shall she then escape?

MALCH. (R.) Well, why did ye not stone her then?

LEVITE. (R.) Yea! Why did not Caiaphas?

CAIAP. 'Tis not befitting I should do it!

ANDREW. (L. C.) The Master said it: "Let him among you who is without sin cast the first stone!"

CAIAP. He hath helped the woman cheat the Law!

LEVITES. Yea, so He hath!

ANDREW. Ye hypocrites! Did ye not skulk, like beaten curs, before His presence? Had ye not, one and all, been guilty as this woman, would ye have staid your hands?

CAIAP. What! This to me? Thou fisherman! And who art thou to judge us?

ANDREW. Thou art a hypocrite, forever winking the eye at sinners in high places, yet thou dost enforce the bitter letter of the Law upon the poor!

CAIAP. What!

ANDREW. All just men shun thee, as the leper's touch, for thou art loathsome with the leprosy of sin!

CAIAP. Thou Galilean swine! I'll make thee suffer for this!

ANDREW. I doubt it not, for I am poor! Go, lick the feet of Herod, the Adulterer, and praise his wanton!

MALCH. The King shall hear this! Thy life shall pay for it!

ANDREW. 'Tis very like! Thou and thine uncle, yonder, and that royal brothel murdered John, the Baptist for this truth!

CAIAPH. Come, friends! We do demean ourselves to mingle with the rabble! Come! (they exit R. muttering.)

MARY M. (kneels, looking off R.) He hath forgiven me! Oh, blessed be His name! Henceforth, I'll sin no more! I'll wash away my past with tears of penitence!

ELIZ. (R. of her.) Poor, erring one! I'll be thy friend!

MARY M. (seizes her hands.) What! Thou? Thou wilt befriend a sinner such as I?

ELIZ. Yea, girl! The best, sometimes, do wrong in some wise! Each one hath his fault; and all have need of His forgiveness!

Come to my house! Thou shalt be a daughter to me! I'll help thee to amend thy life and follow Him!

MARY M. (weeping.) Oh, Heaven bless thy noble, gentle charity!

ANDREW. (R. C.) Heaven hath no angel brighter than a woman who can look with pity on a sister's sin!

SHOUTS (OUT L.) Hosannah to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord! (MARIUS ENTERS L.)

MARIUS. Oh, see, the Master rideth hither, and the multitude cast down their garments and their palms before Him, and, with one voice, cry: "Hosannah to the Holy One!" "See where they come! (all off L.) (Song, picture and procession and curtain.)

ACT II. Scene 2. Before the Temple Court. Moon setting behind the Temple. CAIAP., MALCH and LEVITES discovered.

LEVITE. Is it not wonderful? Jerusalem is crowded as it never was before and still the thronging thousands come, by sea and land, by ship and caravan,—from every clime, to celebrate the Passover!

CAIAP. Yea, there lieth, now, our trouble! They come, with eager question, for the Prophet that hath raised up Lazarus, Jairus' daughter and the widow's son from death. They wonder at His miracles and long to see them He hath healed. They follow Him in wonder calling Him the mightiest of the Prophets, the Messiah, the Prophet King, the Son of David! Oh what is this mighty power that draweth all men to Him?

MALCH. I know not what! We have tried long to get Him to Jerusalem; and now that He is here, we dare not seize Him, lest these thousands, that go wild with wonder at Him, rise up in revolt against us, rescue Him and turn their rage on us, the priests!

LEVITE. Were we, thus openly, to lay a finger on Him, our property and very lives would be in danger!

CAIAP. Then let it not be openly! It must be done by stealth and cunning,—secretly! But yet it must be done! We have Him now, within the city. He must not escape us here!

LEVITE. We dare not take Him at the Passover! The people would be sure to rise!

CAIAP. It must be done at once, before the feast!

LEVITE. But, if we seize Him, when the people learn it,—and 'twill fly from lip to lip,—they'll take Him from us, then, ere we can have him brought to judgment, here, and put to death.

CAIAP. Nay, trust to me! King Herod's guards must hold the multitude at bay; and Pilate, too, would crush out a revolt or tumult in the city.

MALCH. Nay, Pilate hath no sympathy for us or for our ancient faith. I fear he would be slow to act.

CAIAP. Was Pilate ever slow to shed people's blood? Remember how he put the Galileans to the sword, here, where we stand, before the very Temple! These Romans joy at sigh of blood! The slaughter of the rabble or the crucifixion of this Nazarine would be their holiday!

LEVITE. If we could lead Him to some word against the Jewish law, 'Twould break His power with the multitude; or trap Him into words of treason 'gainst the power of Rome, then Pilate would be on our side and crucify Him as a traitor.

MALCH. For two years have we tried to trap Him, but in vain. Ah, He is wiser than us all!

LEVITE. See; Hither cometh Herod and Herodias, his queen! (enter Herod, Herodias and guards L.)

ALL. All hail to Herod, the King and to Herodias, the Beautiful, his queen! All hail! (all salaam.)

HEROD. Welcome, friends! Rabbi Caiaphas, greeting!

CAIAP. Greeting and glory to thee, mighty Herod, and Herodias, the Splendor of the East! (kisses her hand.)

HERODIAS. Ah, Caiaphas! Wert thou not a holy priest, above thy king's suspicion, I fear my Herod's brow would darken at the music of thy words!

HEROD. Good friends, your pardon for our seeming rudeness; but, I pray you, walk apart a little. We would speak alone with the High Priest. Shirez, see that no others may approach! (exeunt all R. and L.) Stay, Malchus Thou art our eye, our ear, that learnest all things, whatsoe'er may hap, unnoted by the multitude. (Malch. remains R. C.—Herod C. Herodias L. of King,—Caiap. L. C.)—Good Caiaphas, we need thy counsel! There cometh rumor that this Nazarine hath come up to Jerusalem, in triumph; and that the shouting multitude hath hailed Him King. Speak, Malchus! Knowest thou of this?

MALCH. Yea, royal Herod, He, indeed, rode hither, toward the City, on an ass's foal; the while the throng, as if gone mad, threw down their garments in His road, and cast down branches of their palms before Him, and, with one voice, cried: "Hosannahs to the Son of David!" Had He but said the word, they would have led the triumph to the very Temple and proclaimed Him King of Israel!

HEROD. (thoughtfully.) Hosannahs to the Son of David!" Hum! Ah, that is what I feared! this secret, mighty movement of the people to make Him King of Israel,—to unseat us and place the crown on Him, who is of David's royal line!

CAIAP. That is indeed, their purpose; But, methinks, that thou hast naught to fear. Be thou but firm, nor pause to act,—use but thy power, and thou wilt send Him where He cannot trouble thee!

HEROD. How meanest thou?

CAIAP. There is one way, and only one, to stay these fools:—destroy their Prophet! carpenter! Thou hast the might of Caesar at thy back, then use it!

HERODIAS. Nay, hear me! A woman's counsel is, oftimes, the best! The Jewish people love not Caesar nor his power. They chafe beneath the galling yoke of Rome! Now Caesar knoweth this. This Man is of Judea's royal line. Might not our cunning Caesar make this fellow king to lull and soothe Judea, as doth a lazy nurse, with baubles, lull a fretful child, that, else, she must chastise till it behaveth? He'd take little thought of thee or Pilate: for, to him, ye are but senseless counters on the board whereon he playeth mighty games of Empire!

CAIAP. The Queen is right! If Caesar deemed this move expedient, he would not waste a moment's thought or care upon thy down-fall or thy ruin.

HEROD. (troubled.) Then what's to be done?

CAIAP. But one thing: thou must act at once! Thou must seize and slay this fellow! He, being dead, e'en Caesar cannot make Him King! Then thou art safe!

HEROD. How best may this be done?

CAIAP. Leave this to us! We'll find some way to seize Him secretly. Have thou thy guards in readiness to join us. 'Twill so awe the people that they dare not move to rescue Him, till He be brought to judgment and condemned and hurried to His death! What then can Caesar do?

HERODIAS. This is good counsel, dear my Lord! Thou hast no other course.

HEROD. I fear to do this!

HERODIAS. Rather fear to wait the hazard of great Caesar's whim, for it may spell thy ruin!

HEROD. Be it so! My guards are at thy beck. Do as ye will! I'll not be seen in it!

CAIAP. Leave that to me! Thou shalt not! (Herod motions guard who enters L.)

HEROD. Shirez, Hold thy guard in readiness to go with the High priest. He and the Levites here, would seize the Nazarine imposter, and would bring Him with all haste, and subtly, lest the people learn it, up to the Hall of Judgment.

SHIREZ. Thy bidding shall be done, oh, King! (exits R.)

HEROD. When thou hast seized Him, send me word of it. I feign would see this man! I fear He is that John! (guards re-enter R.) Well, come, my Love! Come friend Caiaphas! Shirez, Lead on! (Exeunt R.)

MARY MAGDALINE (steals on L.) Oh, what is this? A plot to seize Him! Ha, they come! I'll hide, here, in the shadow, and, perhaps, I learn more, then haste to warn Him! (hides L. as Caiap, Malch. & Levites enter R.)

LEVITE. In the full glare of day, when He is teaching in the synagogue, surrounded by the crowds, we cannot—dare not take Him. At night He goeth, no man knoweth whither,—afar from cowans and eves-droppers! Then, when we might lay hands upon Him, He cannot be found, save by His trusted followers.

MALCH. Wait! Trust all to me! I'll find some way to spy Him out!

CAIAP. Nay, but we cannot wait! It must be done at once,—before Passover! He must be found tonight!

Mary M. (aside) I'll wait no longer! I must find and warn Him! (off L.)

LEVITE. What was that?

CAIAP. A spy! A woman!

MALCH. The Woman of Magdala!

ALL. What?

MALCH. Yes! Stay her! Quick! (He & others off L after her.)

CAIAP. Go, bring her hither! From her lips we'll force the secret of His hiding place.

LEVITE. Thou wilt not, nay, thou canst not do it!

CAIAP. Why?

LEVITE. She is a woman, and her weakness is her strength! She'll die before she will reveal it!

CAIAP. Well, we shall see! (They drag her on L.) Tell us, woman! Where is thy Prophet, the Nazarine?

MARY M. I know not!

MALCH. Wretch! Thou liest! (threatens her.)

MARY M. Nay, I do not lie! I know not where He is!

CAIAP. Woman, beware! Thou knowest our power. Trifle not with me! If thou wilt tell us, we will let thee go, unharmed. If not, well, thou art guilty of adultery! Thy life is forfeit to our law! I swear it, by the Altar yonder, thou shalt die!

MARY M. I tell thee I know not; and, if I did, thou couldst not tear the secret from my breast!

LEVITE. (aside to Caiap.) I told thee this!

CAIAP. (in rage) Thou shalt be stoned to death!

MARY M. Still, I defy you!

MALCH. Think, woman, what it is to die a mangled, trampled thing! Answer Where is the Nazarine?

MARY M. I have already answered thee! (JUDAS enters R.)

MALCH. What! Art thou mad?

JUDAS. Nay, she is a fool, like me!

MALCH. Judas!

JUDAS. Yea, Judas!

CAIAP. She shall tell us where to find the Nazarine, or, by the Temple's Veil, I swear it! She shall die!

JUDAS. She knoweth not; so let the woman go!

CAIAP. Belike thou liest also! Thou art of His following!

JUDAS. His follower no longer! I am a Jew and not a Gallilean dog!

MARY M. (steals off L. unobserved.)

MALCH. (astonished.) Judas! Thou?

JUDAS. Yea, I!

LEVITE. The woman she hath gone!

CAIAP. Ha! She will warn Him!

JUDAS. Nay she cannot! She knoweth not where to find Him!

CAIAP. But thou dost, and thou shalt tell us, or I'll force the secret from thee!

JUDAS. Thou'lt force? I am a Jew and not a dog! Hear me, proud man! Thou art High Priest,—I am a desperate man, and in no mood to bear thine insolence!

CAIAP. What sayest thou? This to me?

JUDAS. (in his teeth) To thee, thou pompous fool! To thee! Thou'lt force, indeed! But try it, and there'll be a new High Priest in Israel!

MALCH. Judas! Art thou mad?

JUDAS. Yea, I am mad with rage and shame! And he is wise that fretteth not the angry leopard!

MALCH. Judas, I am thy friend. Tell me what hath angered thee?

JUDAS. I have been shamed and humbled by the Nazarine. What way, it mattereth not! Enough that I will be revenged!

MALCH. What sayest thou?

JUDAS. That I am weary of my folly and cast off all faith and loyalty to Him!

MALCH. Where is He, then?

JUDAS. He and we twelve have been, but now, at supper.

LEVITE. To supper? Well?

JUDAS. What happened there, it mattereth not, to you! Suffice it that I hate Him and have done with Him!

MALCH. How sayest thou?

JUDAS. I have said!

LEVITE. And thou canst lead us to him?

JUDAS. Yea.

MALCH. Come, then.

JUDAS. Stay but a little! Say, what price thou'lt give me if I will betray Him to you?

CAIAP. We'll give thee, then, a score of silver sheckles if thoult place Him in our power.

JUDAS. If thou wilt give me thirty sheckles, I will lead **you** to Him!

CAIAP. Thou shalt have the price!

JUDAS. Give me the money now!

CAIAP. Go, Malchus, bring the money hither. (exit Malch L.)
Where is the man?

JUDAS. I'll lead thee to Him when I have the money.

CAIAP. Well, so be it then! Go thou, call Shirez and the guard!
(exit Levite R.)

Pick up such staves and weapons as ye may. Belike His followers may make a stand to take Him from us. Go, bring torches here. (exeunt several R & L & return, quickly, with torches & staves.)
Here cometh Malchus with His price. (Malch enters L. with bag.)

MALCH. Here is the money.

JUDAS. Give it to me! (He counts it.)

MALCH. Here are Shirez and the guard. (They enter R.) Yea and the others.

CAIAP. Come! We must make haste. Where is the Nazarine?

JUDAS. Come follow me! He's in the garden of Gethsemane.
Come! (They start R.)

CAIAP. Go quietly, lest we arouse the people.

JUDAS. Whomsoever I shall kiss, the same is He. Hold Him fast!

Come! Come! (Exit L. 2, followed by others.)

MALCH. (To Caiap.) Judas hath lost his reason, or hath got a devil.

CAIAP. What matter which, so he but serve our purpose! (Going L 2) At last! At last! Jesus of Nazareth, thou art in my power! (Exit L 2 Change of scene.)

ACT. 3. SCENE 2. Scene in Nicodemus house, night lights burning. Enter Nicodemus & Joseph R.

JOSEPH. The priests are jealous of His power with the multitude and burn with rage that Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead, should live a monument of Jesus' God-like miracle, to claim the people's wonder. They would compass both their deaths.

NICOD. Yea, Joseph, I know this alas too well. To balk Caiaphas and the curs that follow at his heels, to bark or bite but at his bidding, for the paltry crusts he throws them; I have writ to Pilate telling him the truth. The Nazarine hath taught the people peace and not revolt; and that Caiaphas and his kind would slay Him, that He hath laid bare all their corruptions and hypocrisy. I told him too, the Prophet hath the people's hearts. That they'd resent his wrongs, and counseled him to curb the priests.

JOSEPH. What answer made he?

NICOD. His letter's here! He taketh the same view, and will, I think, check any move that they may make.

JOSEPH. Heaven grant he may!

NICOD. Amen to that! (Marius enters R) Ah, Marius, welcome to my house!

MARIUS. Thank thee, good Nicodemus. (Shakes hands with both.) Greeting, friend Joseph. (To Nicod.) Pray, forgive my rude intrusion, I am come in haste. It had just reached mine ear the Levites mean to seize the Nazarine at once.

JOSEPH & NICOD. What?

MARIUS. Yea, tis true and I am come to raise His friends. I'll lead a rescue and I'll take Him from these dogs, if needs be, with the sword!

NICOD. Nay, good Marius, hear wise counsel.

MARIUS. There's but one way! If they but raise a hand to harm Him, slay them all!

NICOD. Nay friend Marius, wilt thou hear me?

MARIUS. Yea, say on.

NICOD. Well, first of all, the Master would not have thee turn to violence. 'Twould be a riot. Pilate would bring down the iron hand of Rome on all the friends and followers of the Nazarine. 'Twere worse than useless. If it come to that, our cause is lost!

MARIUS. Well, what, then can I do? He shall not die!

NICOD. Thou hast a friend in Pilate. Well, his wife, the good Procula honoreth the Prophet. Go to them and use thine influence to win her to our cause. The distaff, not the sword, thoult find the sceptre that will govern Pilate! Her very gentleness will be our might.

MARIUS. Yea, thou art right, good friend, I thank thee for thy counsel. I will go to her.

ELIZ. (Out R) Where is good master Nicodemus? I must straightway see him.

NICOD. Ah, that, by her voice should be Elizabeth, the mother of the Prophet John. (She enters R.)

JOSEPH. And so it is indeed.

ELIZ. Good friends, I fear some mischief is afoot, and so, I came, in haste to tell you.

NICOD. Why, what hath happened? good Elizabeth to fright thee thus?

ELIZ. I know not what it is! a tumult in the streets, an angry throng with torches! They hasten toward the brook, Cedron, I fear that there is something wrong, some plot against the Master, I am cold with fear!

NICOD. Nay, nay, be calm! Jerusalem is filled with strangers now. Belike 'tis naught but this: The guards of Pilate sent by night to quell some insurrection, brawl or petty riot.

ELIZ. Nay, but 'twas not the guard! These were not Roman soldiers but a mob with staves and torches with some guards of Herod, too. Caiaphas led them.

NICOD. What is this? If thou art right, there's indeed cause for fears! (Enters hurriedly Mary M.)

MARY M. Thank heaven I have found you here! Oh, where is He, the Master?

NICOD. Nay, we know not. What hath chanced?

MARY. Why this, Caiaphas, Herod and the others plot tonight to seize Him! Well, I hid and listened till I heard them plan, and when I would have fled to warn Him, they saw me, seized and dragged me back. Caiaphas swore that, from my heart, he'd tear the secret of His hiding place! Then Judas came, with angry looks, and told them that I knew not where.

MARIUS. Ha, Judas, sayest thou?

NICOD. He is one of the twelve disciples.

MARIUS. Yea, the one that I distrust.

NICOD. What sayst thou?

MARY M. When they turned to talk to him I fled, and came to thee to find and warn the Master! They would do Him harm!

MARIUS. Ha, Judas, sayst thou? What did Judas there?

MARY M. I know not! I but know that he was angry, and I feared 'twas at the Master.

ELIZ. Ah, I was not wrong then when I thought the leader of the mob did look like him!

NICOD. Like Judas?

ELIZ. Yea, but I would not believe mine eyes.

MARIUS. I see it all! He hath betrayed Him!

ALL. What?

MARIUS. Come! We must lose no moment if we save Him from their rage. Come! (Exeunt R Change of scene)

SCENE 3. Scene in High Priest's Hall. Arch through R. U. to the Hall of Pilate with raised platform leading off through arch, and with steps C. leading up to platform. Door L. 2. Door L. C., leading to street. Fire burning on tri-pod or brazier, L. C. CAIAP. & some Levites on platform, & crowd on stage all looking off R through arch R. Maid at door. L. 2. Laughter out R. ANDREW near door L. 2. PETER just entering.

ANDREW. (To maid.) Wilt thou not let him enter also?

MAID. (Admits him.) Thou, too, wast with the man of Nazareth!

PETER. Woman, I know not what thou sayest!

CAIAPH. Did ye not hear His blasphemy? He sayeth that He is the Son of God!

CROWD. Yea, yea, we heard!

CAIAPH. Nay, more! That we should see Him coming in the clouds, sitting on the right hand of power!

MALCH. He hath blasphemed, so let Him die!

CROWD. Aye, aye! put Him to death!

CAIAP. 'Tis for that we have sent Him yonder unto Pilate. We, the Jews, may not pronounce sentence of death.

VOICE out R. Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who 'twas that smote thee? (Laughs out R & by the crowd on stage.)

LEVITE. This fellow also was with Him, the Nazarine!

PETER. Nay, man, I do not know Him!

ANDREW. (Aside, surprised) What!

MALCH. (R on platform.) See! the Proconsul, Pilate hath examined Him, and cometh hither. (Enter Pilate.)

PILATE. Speak, men of Jerusalem! What accusation bring ye 'gainst this man?

CAIAPH. If He were not a malefactor then we would not have delivered Him to thee for judgment.

PILATE. What hath He done?

CAIAPH. He doth pervert the nation, by forbidding to give tribute unto Caesar, saying He Himself is King!

PILATE. Take ye the Man and judge Him, then, according to your law.

CAIAPH. Nay 'tis not lawful for us to put any man to death.

PILATE. I have examined Him and I find, in this man, no fault.

CAIAPH. He stirreth up the people, teaching through all Jewry, starting first from Galilee e'en to this place!

PILATE. Is He a Galilean then?

CAIAPH. He is of Nazareth.

MARIUS. (Enters with letter R arch, aside to Pilate.) Great Proconsul, thy noble lady sendeth me, in haste, to thee, and bids thee,—“Have thou naught to do with that just man, for she hath suffered much, this day in dreams, because of Him.”

PILATE. Marius, is this true?

MARIUS. What! Hath my words been ever aught but true? There is the letter. Read! Thou knowest her hand.

PILATE. It is her character. I know it well. (To crowd.) Thou sayst He is of Galilee. He is of Herod's jurisdiction then. Well. Herod is now in Jerusalem. Take thou this man to him for judgment then, for I'll have naught to do with this! Look to't yourselves. (Exits R)

MALCH. (Sees Peter by fire) Ha! Thou wert with Him in the garden!

PETER. I was not!

MALCH. Thou wert! Thou smotest me! Thy speech betrayeth thee. Thou art a Galilean and His follower!

PETER. 'Tis false I swear it by the temple and the Holy Fire! I do not know the man!

ANDREW. (C.) Peter, the Master looketh at thee! (Cock crows outside, at back.) Hast thou forgot His words? "Ere the cock shall crow thou shalt deny me thrice!"

PETER. (Overwhelmed with remorse) What have I done? Oh Master! forgive me! Oh, I am a coward, a wretch accursed! (Rushes out L.)

CRIES OUT R. Come! away with Him! (Laughs)

LEVITE. Heard ye not the crowing of the cock? The day approacheth. We must make haste.

VOICE OUT R. Blindfold Him then and make Him prophesy who smiteth Him! (Laughs out R.)

CAIAPH. WE may not enter Pilate's court before the Passover. For Jewish priest to set his foot on heathen ground before the feast were gross contamination! Go, therefore, drag Him forth to Herod! We will follow! (Comes down C.)

MARIUS. Is there no justice in Jerusalem?

CAIAPH. What meanest thou?

MARIUS. I mean this thing that thou wouldst do, is murder and not justice.

CAIAPH. (With contempt) Thou art a Roman and thou understandest not our law!

MARIUS. I am a man! I understand injustice!

CAIAPH. He hath blasphemed.

MARIUS. Ye have blasphemed when ye deny He is the son of God!

LEVITE. Hear him! He too blasphemeth!

CROWD. Down with him! Stone him!

MARIUS. YE Syrian dogs! Bark! Howl! Aye, show your teeth! Ye dare not bite! There is a power that hems me round, more royal than the royalty of Kings! I am a Roman citizen!

CAIAPH. Peace, men of Israel! Wouldst thou anger Pilate and bring down the wrath of Rome because this boy would force himself into the councils of the old and wise? Go, thou young heathen! Go! What knowest thou of Israel's God?

MARIUS. More than thou dost who wouldst destroy His son!

CAIAPH. How?

MARIUS. Boy forsooth! I tell thee, gray-beard, to thy teeth, thou art not High Priest of God but of the devil!

CAIAPH. (In rage) Thou—

MARIUS. Aye, and more! Thou'rt not a judge in Israel, but a low assassin!

CROWD. Down with him!

MALCH. Stay! He is a kinsman of the Emperor!

MARIUS. Ye, scum!

PILATE. (Entering R arch.) Peace, what is this! Violence to a Roman? Ha, ye Jews, have care lest ye arouse mine anger, or, by Mars the proudest of you shall have cause for sorrow! There shall be wailing among your widows! (To Marius) Go tell my wife, the fair Procula, I will heed her counsel. (Exit Marius. R, Shouts outdoor L. C. "Herod, the King! All hail! all hail!")

HEROD. (Entering L. C. Pilate comes down to meet him) Most noble Pilate, I am hither come to thank thee for thy courtesy in that thou sendst the Nazarine to me for trial! Come! We have too long been foes. Let us be friends and learn the lesson of the licitor's rods; "In unity is strength!" (Gives hand which Pilate takes.)

PILATE. I meet thy frankness with an open palm! Friends from this, day.

SHOUTS OUT R. Hail! King of the Jews! (Laughter.)

MALCH. (Laughing.) See, the soldiers there have dressed Him in a royal robe! They jeer and flout Him with mock homage!

VOICE OUT R. Go, weave a thorn-crown for the King of Jewry! (Laughter.)

HEROD. My soldiers decked Him in a purple robe and brought Him back to thee.

PILATE. Royal Herod, hast thou condemned this man?

HEROD. Nay, He hath done no violence to Roman law. What can I do? I have returned Him, therefore, for thy judgment.

CAIAPH. (L of Herod.) What?

HEROD. (Aside to Caiaph.) I told thee I would not be seen in this. Look thou to that!

PILATE. Thou hast returned the man to me?

HEROD. He hath done naught in Galilee, my Kingdom, that I may judge Him for. What He hath done, here in Jerusalem, thy jurisdiction, that must be adjudged by thee. Farewell, most noble Pilate! from this hour my friend, my brother!

PILATE. Be it so! (They embrace.)

HEROD. Lead on, guards to the games! (Exit with suit L. C.)

MARIUS. (Enters R.) Thy wife, Procula, sendeth thee greeting and grateful thanks. She would not see this good man wronged!

CROWD. Judgment!

PILATE. Indeed, Marius, this troubleth me!

MARIUS. What meanest thou?

PILATE. Herod returneth Him to me for judgment!

MARIUS. Release Him then!

PILATE. I'll try.

MARIUS. (surprised.) Thou'll try?

PILATE. These Jewish dogs are mad! They lick their lips in their blood hunger for this man!

CROWD. Give judgment! Crucify Him!

PILATE. Dost thou not hear?

MARIUS. But He is innocent!

PILATE. I know this and would save Him if I can.

CROWD. Stone the blasphemer! Crucify Him! Down with the Nazarine!

PILATE. Oh, peace! Ye've brought this man to me as one that doth pervert the people, and behold I have examined Him before you all, and find in Him no fault, touching the things whereof ye have accused Him. No, nor Herod; for I sent you unto him, and lo, nothing is found worthy of death. (Murmurs) I therefore will chastize Him and release Him. (Murmurs) for, of necessity, I must release Him who is proven innocent.

CROWD. He's guilty! Crucify Him!

CAIAPH. Yea, down with the blasphemer! ..

PILATE. (Mockingly.) Ye have a custom, at your passover, that I set free to you a prisoner at your feast: I will release, then, this King of the Jews!

CROWD. Away with this man! Crucify Him!

MALCH. Release to us Barrabbas!

CROWD. Yea, yea, Barrabas!

PILATE. Barrabas is a felon, robber, murderer!

CAIAPH. The Nazarine is a blasphemer!

CROWD. Crucify Him! Crucify Him!

PILATE. I find in Him no fault. What evil hath He done!

CROWD. He hath blasphemed! Away with Him!

PILATE. Well, let the man stand forth! Ye see I bring Him forth before you all that ye may know I find no fault in Him. Behold the man! (Light calcium on R arch. Picture.)

CROWD. Crucify Him! Crucify Him!

CAIAPH. We have a law; and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God!

PILATE. (Troubled) Ah, what is this?

MARIUS. Yea, so He is! and that is why the good Procula would not have thee do Him wrong!

PILATE. Guard, let this man be scourged!

LONG. (out R) Scourge ye the prisoner! (Sound of scourge)

PILATE. This man is better than you all! It is your jealousy hath prompted this: therefore I scourge Him and will set Him free. (Long & guard enter R)

CAIAPH. Hear Pilate! If thou lettest this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend!

PILATE. What?

CAIAPH. Whoever maketh himself King, speaketh against Caesar!

PILATE. Behold your King!

CAIAPH. We have no king but Caesar!

CROWD. Yea, Caesar, the Emperor! Away with the Nazarine! Crucify Him!

PILATE. (To attendants. Go, bring me hither water and a napkin. (To Caiaph.) This is thy doing and not mine, and thou shalt bear its curse. (Water brought, he washes hands) Behold, oh men of Israel! Before you all, I wash my hands, in token I am guiltless of the blood of this just man.

CAIAPH. His blood be on us and on our children!

CROWD. Yea, on us and on our children!

NICODEMUS. (rushing on L. to C.) So it will! The day will come, and soon! when your own children curse you for this day and for this deed of blood!

CAIAPH. What dost thou here?

NICOD. To tell thee, traitor, that thou hast betrayed and spoke the death word of thy native land!

CROWD. Away with him! (Malch. and crowd driving him out.)

NICOD. (Backing out L. C.) Anathema upon you all! The fate of Israel,—the curse of blood be on ye! Hear me! He, whom you would slay, is the Messiah and the SON of GOD!

CROWD. Blasphemy! Away with Him! Stone him! (Exit Nicod. driven out door L. C.)

CAIAPH. If thou art Caesar's friend, give judgment!

PILATE. (Enraged.) Ye Hebrew dogs! The mercy that you show unto Him henceforth will I show to you!

CROWD. Crucify Him! Crucify Him!

PILATE. Ye savage beasts! Have ye your will! GO take the man and crucify Him then!

MARIUS. No, by Hercules, they shall not!

PILATE. What, boy, knowest thou who ruleth in Jerusalem?

MARIUS. Yea, that mob! They rule thee, the Proconsul!

PILATE. What meanest thou?

MARIUS. That I myself will raise the people and rescue Him!
PILATE. What? Wouldst thou raise revolt to undo my commands?

MARIUS. Yea, wert thou Caesar's self!

PILATE. Treason!

MARIUS. I care not Pilate! I will save this man in spite of thee,—in spite of Rome!

PILATE. Guards, seize him! (Guards obey.)

MARIUS. Thou shamest Roman justice, warping it to fit the shoulders of their swinish souls! (Murmurs of rage.) Thou hast conspired with these Jewish dogs to murder Him!

PILATE. Away with him! (Guards drag him out of L. C.)

MARIUS. Oh, Israel! Thus hath your crime begun! Mark where it ends. (Exit L. C. Crowds shout.)

CROWD. Away now with the Nazerine!

PILATE. Peace! Longinus, take this man and crucify Him! (Shouts.) Make thou this writing in three tongues, the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew,—that all men may read, and place it o'er Him on the cross, "JESUS of NAZERETH, KING of the JEWS!"

CROWD. (Howling) No! No!

CAIAPH. Pilate, wouldst thou heap shame and insult on us? Write not that; but that He saith, "I am King of the Jews!"

PILATE. Silence, you dogs! What I have written, I have written! So shall it stand. (Guard holds up scroll, written.) (Pilate points to it & repeats.) JESUS of NAZERETH, KING of the JEWS! (Picture. Change of scene.)

Scene 4. (In 1st. grooves.) Street in Jerusalem. Morning. Peter enters R. dejected.

PETER. Oh, I am a thing for all just men's contempt and scorn! For one moment brave to smite, but, in that house, the demon, Fear, possessed my soul, and I, forgetful of the Master's words denied Him thrice! Then, at the crowing of the cock, came memory and remorse! And then His sad and gentle eyes turned on me! Oh their mild reproof, their pity infinite! Oh, can I e'er forget them.

NICOD. (Staggers on L.) Oh, I can go no further!

PETER. What is this? Why, man, what aileth thee?

NICOD. Why, this it is; the Levites, in their jealous madness, seek to slay the Holy Nazarine. I raised my voice to warn them and to save my country from the curse of Holy blood; and when I said: "He is the Son of God!" they drove me out with staves and stones and smote me sore and would have slain me. I cried, "Is there no help?" "There is," a voice whispered, then three brethren held the mob at bay while I escaped!

PETER. Oh, tell me! will they slay the Master?

NICOD. Yea, they are mad for blood! I fear they will.

PETER. (On knees, weeps). Oh, good, gentle Master! Oh, forgive me!

NICOD. Thou art His friend, His follower?

PETER. Yea, yea, I am indeed, though, like a coward, I denied Him there, before them all!

NICOD. Thou didst?

PETER. Yea, wretch that I am! I was afraid, and in my fear forgot all, all! Oh, woe is me!

JOSEPH of ARAMATHEA. (Entering R.) What? Nicodemus, friend! What thing hath happened unto thee?

NICOD. The priests and Levites smote me and would have slain me.

JOSEPH. What?

NICOD. Yea, 'tis true!

JOSEPH. But why?

NICOD. I tried to save the prophet, Jesus, from Caiaphas and His murderers.

JOSEPH. That tiger-hearted brood that make their lair in God's own temple, and bring shame on Israel.

NICOD. Yea, worse than shame! The curse, that followeth this dark day's deed of blood, shall smite all Israel and shatter it to earth's four corners! Oh, Jerusalem! Thy streets shall run red with thy children's blood, and thou shalt fall in ruin o'er their graves; the Roman's heel shall grind thee, howling, he shall spill thy life-blood in the ashes of thy former splendor.

JOSEPH. Yea, brother, they have signed, in blood, this day, the doom of Israel.

NICOD. Yea, and we are powerless to stay them.

PETER. Heaven!

JOSEPH. Who is this?

NICOD. A poor and frightened follower of His. He did befriend me here.

JOSEPH. Come to my house! I will bind up thy wounds. Thou didst thy best to save Him, thou canst do no more, then, come!

NICOD. Oh, Israel, when the day of wrath shall come, who will bind up thy wounds? Thoult cry in vain for succor,—none shall come to thee! Thine hope shall fail and thou shalt fall and die beneath the feet of nations! Israel, oh Israel! (They exit R.)

PETER. This man, a Pharisee, doth hazard all to save the Master, and yet I, who hung upon His words, and saw, in Him, the Son of God, why I, when dagger came shrunk, like a coward, and denied my Lord! Is there in Heaven pardon for a sin like mine? Ah, what is this? the guards of Pilate and Marius, the young Roman! A prisoner, too! What meaneth this? (Retires L.) (Enters Marius, in chains, between two guards R 1.)

MARIUS. Oh shame! A Roman citizen chained like a dog! Oh. Pilate and the temple jackal brood did well to tie my hands! By Hercules, else would I make fierce havoc with His murderers! They should have learned 'twas not for naught Marius had been bred a Roman soldier! (Salome enters R.) Salome!

SALOME. Aye, Salome the depised! Salome, who, despite thine hate, thy scorn, would save and set thee free!

MARIUS. Free?

SALOME. Recall thy bitter words,—forget the past and let us be unto each other as we were before this madness of the prophets came to mar our happiness, and I will make thee free, nay, more, a King!

MARIUS. (Fiercely) And thinkest thou, I'd buy my liberty on terms like these?

SALOME. What?

MARIUS. Thou, with thy cruel cunning, comest now too late! Thou knowest they have slain the noble Nazerine?

SALOME. The Nazarine?

MARIUS. Yea, thou and thy father, Herod, thy mother, Pilate and that brood of vultures, making the temple their foul roost! Ye, ye have done to death the greatest heart that ever throbbed in human breast!

SALOME. What meanest thou?

MARIUS. Thou knowest well enough! My hands were chained,

lest I should save Him; that ye might blot out Heaven's truth and slay the hope of all the world!

SALOME. Marius! Art thou mad!

MARIUS. Not mad enough to sign a bond with thee, or thine, for mocking freedom, that cometh too late to save the Master! Ye brood of Hell! Ye murdered John and now the very Son of God! Upon your heads be this damnation greater than the rest!

SALOME. Thou fool! Rouse not the tigress lest thou feel her claws.

MARIUS. Thou Harpy! Mark me well! I hunger for the day when I may lead the swords of Rome to reap these Hebrew heads from King to beggar, for this deed of blood! Begone!

SALOME. (Fiercely.) Be it so! I fling back thy defiance! Rot, like a felon, in thy chains! Oh, thou shalt learn what t'is to have Salome for thy foe! (Exit R.)

MARIUS. Begone, and never let me see thy face again! Come, soldiers, do your duty! Take me to the tower! My tardy freedom, when it cometh, cometh all too late to save the Holy man! Oh, Master! Would I might have died for thee! (Exeunt L passing Peter.)

PETER. He too would give his life to save his friend, our Master! Heaven forgive my guilty fear and make of me, henceforth, a man like this, to dare all things for the right's sake, no matter what the end! (Exit L. Change of scene to the crucifixion. Hymn and curtain.)

END OF ACT 3.

ACT IV. Scene 1. The roof garden of Herod's Palace. Cyclorama drop at back, showing the roofs of City. Parapet cross at back, with set tree top showing R. C. behind it. Rich tent awning with heavy cords and tassels, L. 2. Rich Oriental couch, with rugs and cushions. C. SALOME discovered on couch. All exits and entrances above awning, L. 3.

SALOME. Oh, my brain is fire,—my heart a tempest! Can woman love and hate a man at once? To cast aside by burning love to herd with beggars, fishermen, the scum! To scorn, despise, denounce me! me, Salome, proud princess of Galilee! Ah, I hate and could kill him! Yet how grand he looked, even while he cursed me! Oh, he is a King, my King! I'll have him though I sell my soul to win him! I would have my captive,—a thing to love, to smother with my kisses! To fold in loving arms, to own! Mine! Mine!

LONGINUS. (Enters L. 3.) Greeting, oh Royal Salome!

SALOME. (Starts up.) Ah, thou? Tell me what hast thou learned, Longinus.

LONG. The people are so terror-stricken at the awful signs and omens that they fear they may have been misled into the murder of a God. They say this Nazerine could have been nothing less than God.

SALOME. Well, what more?

LONG. From fear, they turn with hate on those who led them: on Caiaphas, Herod, the King, thy mother and thyself. It looketh like revolt!

SALOME. Has thou heard aught of him,—of that disciple, Andrew, mine enemy?

LONG. The followers of the mighty Nazerine are hid like frightened creatures of the wilderness; but yet he watcheth, waiteth openly to warn them of their danger. He waiteth even now, beside the Joppa gate.

SALOME. (With triumphant smile.) Ah, the Joppa Gate! Well, and Marius? What of him?

LONG. This Andrew hath told him that thou wilt never rest till thou hast won him back; or, failing that, thou wouldst slay the followers of the Nazerine to the last soul! That thou wert cruel and remorseless as is death!

SALOME. (Aside) The slave! he'll dig his grave with his own tongue! (Aloud.) Tell me what he said Marius, then?

LONG. He said thou wert a monster, that he'd tear his heart out ere he'd love the murderess, Salome.

SALOME. (In despair.) Oh, Marius! Marius! (In rage.) The curse of Pluto on that venomous snake! This Andrew, 'twas through him I lost Marius. But for his canting creeds, my love would not have taken up this beggar's faith, and I should not have quarreled with him, and, in my rage, become a tool for that glittering snake, Caiaphas, and, by that dance of death, have placed myself beyond reach of his pardon. Oh, my foe, my foe! 'Tis thou hast robbed me of Marius' love, but thou shalt not escape! Thou playest a bold game, with a princess' love against thy worthless life! Those are the stakes, and thou shalt play it to the end. (By couch.)

LONG. What are thy commands?

SALOME. (Sitting on couch, drums on floor with foot.) Thou sayest at the Joppa Gate?

LONG. Yea, Princess, He waiteth for the fleeing followers of the Nazerine.

SALOME. Go thou,—take Shirez with thee, ye shall fall upon this Andrew at the gate. Drag him, with speed, away from prying eyes; then kill him, as thou wouldst a dog!

LONG. I'll do thy royal bidding. (Going L. 3. meets MALCH, followed by an old sooth-sayer.)

MALCH. Princess, thou didst command that I shouldst find for thee a sooth-sayer. I came upon this one, but now, there, in the palace court below. He is from Delphos, the city of the famous oracle.

SALOME. (To Long.) Do thou my bidding.

LONG. Think of him as dead! (Exit L. 3.)

SOOTH-SAYER. (Aside.) Dead?

SALOME. (On couch.) Art thou a sooth-sayer, and canst thou read the future?

SOOTH-SAYER. Thou hast said, Oh royal lady, I know the signs and portents of the times.

SALOME. Tell me, then, what thou knowest.

SOOTH-SAYER. The King and all the might in Jerusalem are troubled at the great convulsions, that shook earth and heaven, when the Holy One was slain.

SALOME. That needeth no sooth-sayer to learn. What then?

SOOTH-SAYER. They'd fain drive out the Nazerine's sect, fearing a rising of the people. The princess hath a special cause of fear and hate.

SALOME. Hum! of hate, but not of fear! Well?

SOOTH-SAYER. She hath prepared his death, but it shall not succeed.

SALOME. (Starts up.) Ha, what sayest thou?

SOOTH-SAYER. Lady, thou asketh for the truth. The followers of the Prophet shall escape the King, and thy revenge shall fail and mock thee at the last.

SALOME. (Fiercely.) It shall not fail! My royal father, Herod, shall put this rabble to the sword, and he, this Andrew, that hath

robbed me of my love, shall die! Longinus and Shirez shall slay him at the Joppa Gate!

SOOTH-SAYER. The Joppa Gate?

SALOME. Aye, he waiteth there for others of his kind,—Now by Cerebus! he shall not escape my vengeance! I will go myself!

MALCH. What? Thou?

SALOME. (Snatches dagger from couch.) Yea, I will slay him with these, mine own hands!

MALCH. Think of thy safety.

SALOME. Nay, I but think of my revenge!

MALCH. The streets are dangerous to thee, Princess! They swarm with angry people. They love thee not.

SALOME. Away, I say!

MALCH. (Puts up hand restraining.) Thou must not!

SALOME. (Threatens with dagger.) Thou jackal! Stand thou from my path or—(Rushes at him with dagger, he springs aside, she rushes out L. 3. He follows shouting to her.)

MALCH. Nay, hear me, Princess! Thy life is—(Sooth-sayer throwing off disguise discovers Marius.)

MARIUS. Ah, I thought so! This trick was not in vain! slaughter the faithful? What! murder Andrew at the Joppa Gate? I'll save them! Ah, that palm tree! One bold leap, a clamber to the pavement,—that dark street is a shorter path! I can be there before them! (Leaps from parapet, tree shaken as if by climbing.) (Pause.) (Enter Caiaphas L. 3.)

CAIAPH. I cannot rest! These awful signs:—This man of Nazareth must verily have been the greatest of the Prophets, if not the long looked for Messiah himself! What have we done? Pilate hath set the seal of Rome upon His tomb and placed a guard there lest His followers should steal away His body and give out that He hath risen from the dead! This hath unnerved me, and, at every sound, I start and tremble, lest the thunder-bolt may fall! (Herod enters L. 3.) Homage and greeting to thee, Royal Herod!

HEROD. Ah, Rabbi Caiaphas, thou art here!

CAIAPH. Yea, the messenger whom thou didst send to bid me hither, did but meet me coming. I was on my way to tell thee all that hath befallen since the Nazerine's death.

HEROD. (Excitedly.) All? Is't not enough the sun was darked, that night swallowed up the day? That the earth trembled as with fear? That men's eyes, in that black darkness, have seen fearful things? Oh, is not this enough?

CAIAPH. Enough, but yet not all! The worst is yet! Before He died He turned His eyes toward heaven and cried, as if in triumph: "It is finished!" And then His life went out! That instant Midnight fell across the face of Noon;—an earth-quake shook Jerusalem and waked the sheeted dead, who walked and muttered in the streets and spoke to living men, whose hearts stood still, and who, with quaking knees and jaws down-dropped, could find no voice to answer!

HEROD. (Fearfully.) Then it was true! I did not dream! I was not mad.

CAIAPH. What meanest thou?

HEROD. Methought I saw the ghost of my proud sire, Herod, the Great, that muttered: "Woe to thee, Herod; Woe to thee, Jerusalem!" and then there passed a shadowy company,—the misty forms of those whom I had slain,—who, pointing each, with warning finger, moaned: "Woe, to thee, Murderer!" With blanched

cheeks and starting eyes, I gazed! My trembling lips that tried to speak, gurgled and gibbered like the ghostly dead. Shrieking, I sank and swooned and knew no more!

CAIAPH. Oh King, thou'rt not alone in this! I, too, have seen that which hath made my heart stand still! But hear thou yet the worst! When darkness fell and the earth trembled, the forked lightning burst from angry Heaven and quivered o'er the temples' lofty towers. That instant, in the Holy Place, the Sacred Veil was rent in twain; and, o'er the golden-winged cherubim, the mystics, awful God-fire, the Shekinah did not go out in darkness!

HEROD. (Shuddering.) Oh Rabbi these are awful things! Could he have been a God?

CAIPAH. (In fear.) Oh King, I know not! If, indeed, He were, then we are damned beyond redemption.

HEROD. And yet, He being dead, what have we then to fear?

CAIAPH. More than thou deemest! If He be God in mortal flesh, death cannot hold him! He was dead when these dread signs of Heaven's vengeance shook Jerusalem! Besides, the people! No man must know the Sacred Fire hath failed within yon temple, or all Israel would rise in wild revolt! Our lives would not be worth a farthing's price:—for that mad mob that followed, howling, at His death, would crucify us on the self-same spot; or, like wild beasts, would tear us joint by joint!

HEROD. 'Tis true! My guards and spies bear witness that they scowl and mutter since these awful signs, fearing that they have been lead astray. We must drive out His followers lest they lead the rabble to believe He was a God and lay the blame on us, who did this thing.

CAIPAH. Yea, thou art right! And Pilate is in danger, too. 'Twas he who gave Him to the mob. He must give warrant for their driving out.

HEROD. (Showing scroll.) He hath. I have it here, under the seal of Caesar. 'Tis our only safety.

HERODIAS. (Entering L. 3.) Oh, my Heros, is it thou? I am so fearful and my soul so shaken by this rage of nature, that I tremble at each trifle; and, when thou and my Salome art not near me, I am filled with fear of that mad woman's prophesy.

HEROD. (Soothing.) Fear not, my sweet! Art thou not queen of Galilee thy Herod's throne protected by the sceptre of the Caesar's? What hast thou to fear?

HERODIAS. I know not what! Caesar is Emperor of Rome but not of fate! Where is Salome?

MALCH. (Enters hurriedly, L. 3.) I will tell thee! She hath sent Longinus to seize that follower of John, that Andrew, at the Joppa Gate, and slay him.

HERODIAS. (Impatiently.) Well?

MALCH. Angered at a Sooth-sayer's words, she hath gone hence, herself to see it done.

HERODIAS. (Wringing her hands.) What? My child? through the streets at night,—alone, the city filled with fear and anger, a seething caldron of revolt?

MALCH. I thought to stay her, but she turned on me in rage and would not listen. She snatched a dagger from her couch and fled.

HERODIAS. (Wringing hands.) My child! My willful child! (To servant) Quick, come with me! (To Herod) Call up the

guards to follow. Who knoweth what peril may o'ertake her! Come! (Exit L. 3.)

HEROD. (Following.) Ho, Guards! (Exit L. 3.)

CAIAPH. (To Malch.) Her senseless rage may bring down this revolt ere we are braced to meet it. These baleful signs of doom have made of me a coward! At every turn I start in fear lest— (turns and faces Judas who has entered) Judas!

JUDAS. (Wildly throws coat from face.) Aye Judas, the traitor! Judas, whose soul thou bought'st for thirty pieces of base silver! Judas, whom thou didst hire to betray the Son of God! Judas, whose soul thou'st hurled to hell! In all, climes and ages, to the farthest reach of time, the name of Judas shall mean traitor that betrayeth with a kiss!

CAIAPH. (With fear and loathing) Thou fool, why comest thou to me?

JUDAS. (Throws bag of silver at his feet.) To hurl thee back thy silver! It drippeth with His blood! Thou! Thou hast made of me a wretch, damned beyond all name! Thou and I have done the blackest crime of all the ages from the dawn of time unto its end!

CAIAPH. Look thou to that! I have enough of horror on my soul! Bear thou, thyself the burthen of thy crime!

JUDAS. Devil! Thou didst share my crime, share thou my doom! Thou, thou didst tempt me to my soul's damnation! In the day of judgment answer thou for this! (Throws cord around his own neck and leaps from battlement.)

MALCH. (R. C. at back, runs and looks over parapet.) He hath hanged himself. Nay the cord unwindeth! He falleth to the court below!

CAIAPH. (Trembling.) Haste! Bring him in, lest this get noised abroad! (Malch. runs off L. 3.) Should this be known, 'twould add another danger to the thousand that already hang above our heads! This storm of death o'erwhelms me! It will drive me mad! Where will this end? Where will it end? (They bring in body and lay it C., CAIAPH. spurns body with his foot) Dog of a traitor! For a slave's price thou didst betray thy Master, knowing who He was! We must needs use such instruments as thou, but we despise them while we use them! (Picture Close.)

Scene 2. The gates of Jerusalem. Night. Andrew, wrapped in cloak, waiting.

ANDREW. Dead! Dead! He whom we thought would rule as King of Israel! And yet the strange prophetic words Elizabeth once spoke! She said that John had only gone before;—that they should say the Christ as they had John, that through His death our sins should be atoned. How plain it all is now! And now His friends and followers are hunted down by these fierce hounds of Herod and the priests. They must be saved at any cost! (Marius runs on L.) Ah, Marius? Brother? Thou?

MARIUS. Yes! Quick! The King! They seek to put the faithful to the sword. Go thou and warn them!

ANDREW. But why didst thou not go thyself, at once?

MARIUS. I came to warn thee. Then, I know not where they hide. They would not trust me, me, a Roman, and,—they think, a friend of Pilate and the King. Go thou! They will believe thee.

ANDREW. (Doubtfully.) But the others? But Elizabeth? They will be here—

MARIUS. Leave them to me! She trusteth me. I will keep watch and warn them. Go I pray thee, brother! Save the others!

ANDREW. As thou wilt. Take thou my cloak! It hampereth me. I must be free and swift of foot. (Exit L. 1.)

MARIUS. (Puts on cloak) Thank heaven he hath gone! Had I but told him also of his danger, he would not have stirred from here. He is the stuff of which are martyrs made! Brave heart! He'd glory in his martyrdom! Me, they dare not touch; and if they did,—I have been trained a soldier from my boyhood! I am a match for any four of them! And if I fell, what nobler death than dying for one's friend? (Long. and Shirez have entered R., behind him,—Stop, then creep and spring upon his back. Quick struggle. He then throws them.) L. Salome has entered R., runs up and stabs him in the back.) Ha! (Turns) What! Thou?

SALOME. (Recognizes him. Screams.) Marius! (Soldiers cross quickly, at back to R.)

MARIUS. (Staggers to knees then elbow.) Aye, Marius! Thou hast done thy worst to me.

SALOME. (On knees by him.) Oh Marius! My love! My life! I did not know 'twas thou!

MARIUS. It matters little! Thou wouldst have slain him. Andrew, my brother in our Holy Faith.

SALOME. Aye dearest. I would slay him! 'Twas through him, I lost thy love!

MARIUS. 'Twas thou, thyself, didst murder love when thou didst murder that poor captive, John.

SALOME. (Crazed.) Nay, hear me! I was mad at loss of thee, and I became a willing tool of vengeance to my mother and that subtle fiend Caiphas! It was love of thee!

MARIUS. And was it love of me that made thee and thy brood give up the man of God, to the wild mob to crucify?

SALOME. (Wildly.) Nay, my Marius! nay, I swear it! I knew naught of that! That sin is not upon my soul! Ah, thou art pale! Look up! There! Lean on me!

MARIUS. Nay, let be! 'Tis thou hast slain me.

SALOME. No, no, my love! Oh say not that! 'Twas but a poor, weak woman's hand! The wound cannot be deep.

MARIUS. 'Tis deep enough to reach my life!

SALOME. Oh do not say that love! Be strong! Thou shalt not die! Forgive me, dearest! Oh, forgive!

MARIUS. (Sadly.) Aye, Salome. I forgive and pity thee! (She starts to speak.) Nay, hear me! I have only moments now. Repent Believe in Him! (Gasps) Ah!

SALOME. (Screams) Marius!

MARIUS. (Sinking) Art thou there?

SALOME. (Wildly.) Aye, dearest!

MARIUS. Come close! Father, forgive her! Save—(Dies.)

SALOME. Marius! Marius! (Screams.) Dead! Dead! (Falls sobbing on his body.) (Herodias rushes on R. with servants.)

HERODIAS. Salome! Child!

SALOME. (Starts to her knees, fiercely) Back! Touch me not, unnatural mother! Thou mad'st of me a thing of blood! I am not thy child!

HERODIAS. (Appalled) Ye Gods, she hath gone mad!

SALOME. Aye mad, and thou hast made me so! Thou, thou, through that first crime, hast made me kill my love!

HERODIAS. (Recognizing body.) Marius!

SALOME. Yea, Marius! (Over body) In all the world there was not such another man! My love! My own! (Weeps.)

HERODIAS. (Brokenly.) Come, Salome! Come away!

SALOME. Fiercely.) Touch me not, woman! Thou, mad'st me murder John and lose his love! Behold the end! Take thou my curse, and add to thy remorse. (Stabs herself) The murder of thy child!

HERODIAS. (Springs forward and snatches her arm, screams) Salome!

SALOME. (Throws her off) Away! (Falls on Marius' body.) Marius, dearest, I come to thee! Forgive me! Thy faith shall be my faith! I do believe! Ah!—One kiss! (Kisses him) My love! Marius—(Dies.)

HERODIAS. (Screams and falls on knees beside her. Eliz. and others appear L.) My child! Salome! Oh look up and speak to me! It is thy mother, girl! Oh, child! recall thy curse! My child! Oh, my poor child!

ELIZ. This is God's judgment on thee, murderess!

HERODIAS. (Starts up) Ha! Thou?

ELIZ. Aye, woman! I bade thee, when this time should come, remember then Elizabeth!

HERODIAS. Thou fiend!

ELIZ. (Prophetically) The Lord hath said it! "What ye sow that shall ye also reap!" Thou hast sown blood and tears! Reap thou the harvest!

HERODIAS. (Starts up R. C. furious.) That will I and I will reap with swords! Thou and thy herd shall be the harvest! (To guards) Come! bear her hence! (To Eliz.) Dogs! Ye litter of the Nazerines! Ye shall not one escape! She and guards, with body off R.).

ELIZ. (Kneels by Marius' body.) Good, brave Marius! Thou wert as a son to me! Thou hast been faithful until death. Thou goest to thy reward! (Andrew, Peter and others enter L.)

ANDREW. Ah, what is this?

ELIZ. Marius!

ANDREW & PETER. Dead?

ELIZ. Yea, they have killed him!

ANDREW. (Kneels by him) Oh, brave! Oh, noble! Ha, I see it all! He took my place to save me, and gave up his life for mine.

ELIZ. So did the Master for the ones he loved! (Herod enters R. with soldiers.)

HEROD. Ha, they are here! Guards slay and spare not! (Cloaked figure appears standing in gates C.)

JOHN. (Cloaked) Hold, man of blood!

HEROD. (Startled.) Give way, I command you in the name of Caesar!

JOHN. (Throws off head cloth) Back, I command you in the name of God!

HEROD. (In terror.) John! At last! The dead alive! Flee, on your lives! Flee! (Herod and soldiers rush off R.)

ELIZ. John! My son!

JOHN. Yea, and thy brother in His redemption! I await thee there! (Pointing up. All kneeling. Spirit fades. Picture. Close in.)

Scene 3. Night. Near Jerusalem. Shows city in distant background R. Enter Eliz., Peter, Andrew, and others R.

PETER. We are safe awhile. King Herod's terror will so paralyze his arm, that we have naught to fear from him.

ANDREW. Without the King, Caiaphas can do naught. His hands are tied, for Pilate will not move except to crush revolt. He would but mock their tales of danger and their fear.

ELIZ. The Lord hath saved His people by a miracle that His eternal truth should never die but grow till it hath reached the farthest sea.

ANDREW. Yea, Israel hath denied Him and His Holy truth. Henceforth God's chosen people are the world!

PETER. (Looks sadly toward Jerusalem.) Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem! Thou hast stoned the prophets and slain them who sought thy salvation! The hand of the heathen and the stranger shall be upon thee, and the glory of God shall depart from thy midst! The Romans shall crush thee 'neath the heel, and their swords shall reap thy children as the reapers reap the grain! Thou too, shalt be Golgotha, the place of the skull! Heaven shall smite thee even as thou hast smitten the servants of thy God!

ELIZ. (Sadly) Oh, land of Our fathers! Heaven's curse shall fall upon thee; but His redemption shall reach thee at the last!

ANDREW. Let us go into the land of Galilee, into the hill country, round about Genesaret.

PETER. Yea, there in the shelter of the wilderness or by the lonely sea, whose every spot He hath made sacred, we may mourn for Him that's gone.

ELIZ. (Looks off L.) Who cometh hither, with such haste, as though her feet were winged with a joy? Look, thou! Mine eyes are dim with sorrow.

ANDREW. It is Mary Magdalene! What joy so soon hath come to one who mourned our Master so?

MARY MAGD. (Entering quickly L. 1.) Oh, He hath risen!

PETER. Risen?

ANDREW. What sayest thou? } Simultaneously.

ELIZ. What! The Master?

MARY M. Yea, our Lord hath risen!

PETER. Glory to His name!

ELIZ. Tell us!

MARY M. Yea, hear me, all! His mother, I and Lazarus' sister, Mary had sought His tomb, but now to weep beside the dead; and lo, an angel sat beside the open door! The door had fallen, and the Master's body gone! The angel bade us weep no more, our Lord had risen! So, in haste, we sped by different ways, to find His sorrowing friends and tell the joyous tidings! Come with me!

ELIZ. Yea, let us go at once! Oh, He hath conquered death! My heart had told me truly when it prophesied!

PETER. Come, friends! Make haste! The Lord hath triumphed and the world is saved! (Exeunt joyously.) Change to apotheosis and curtain. Music, "The Holy City."

END

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